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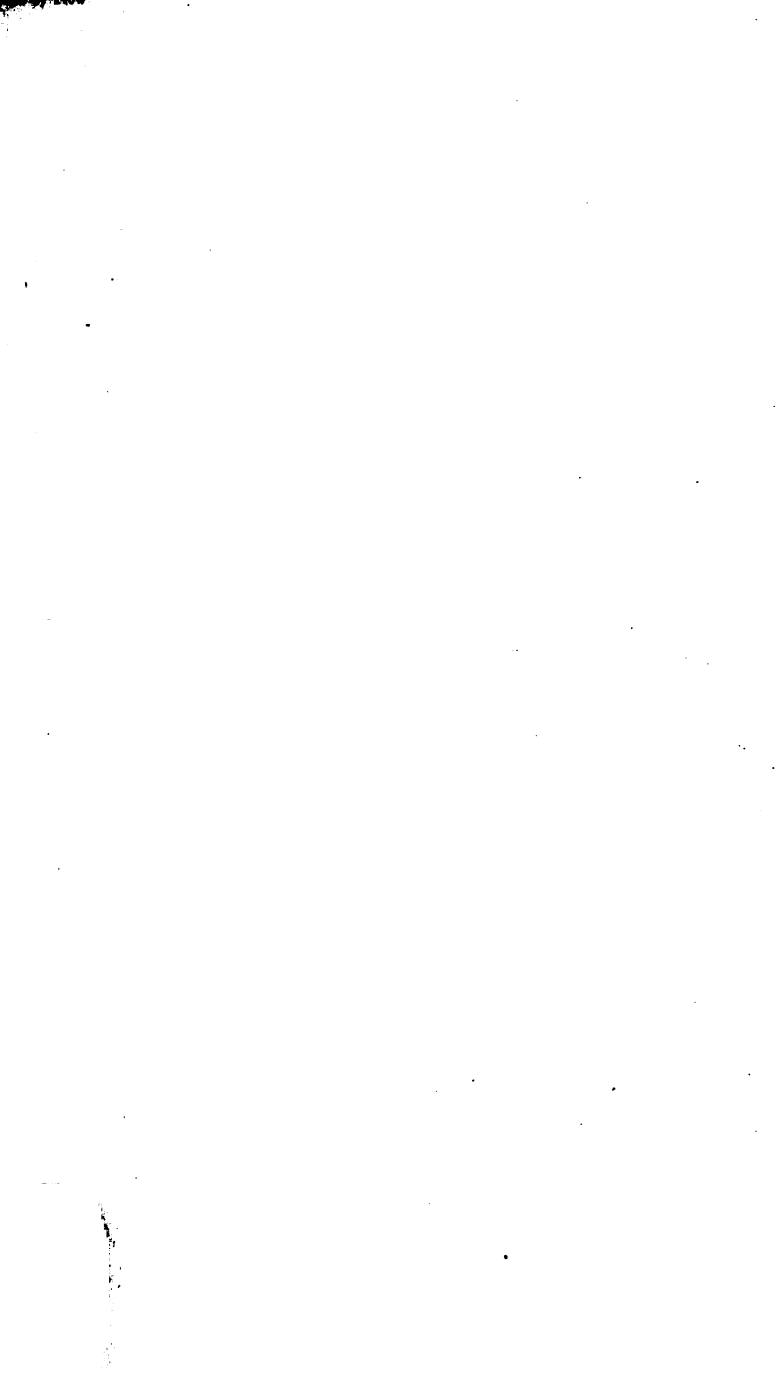
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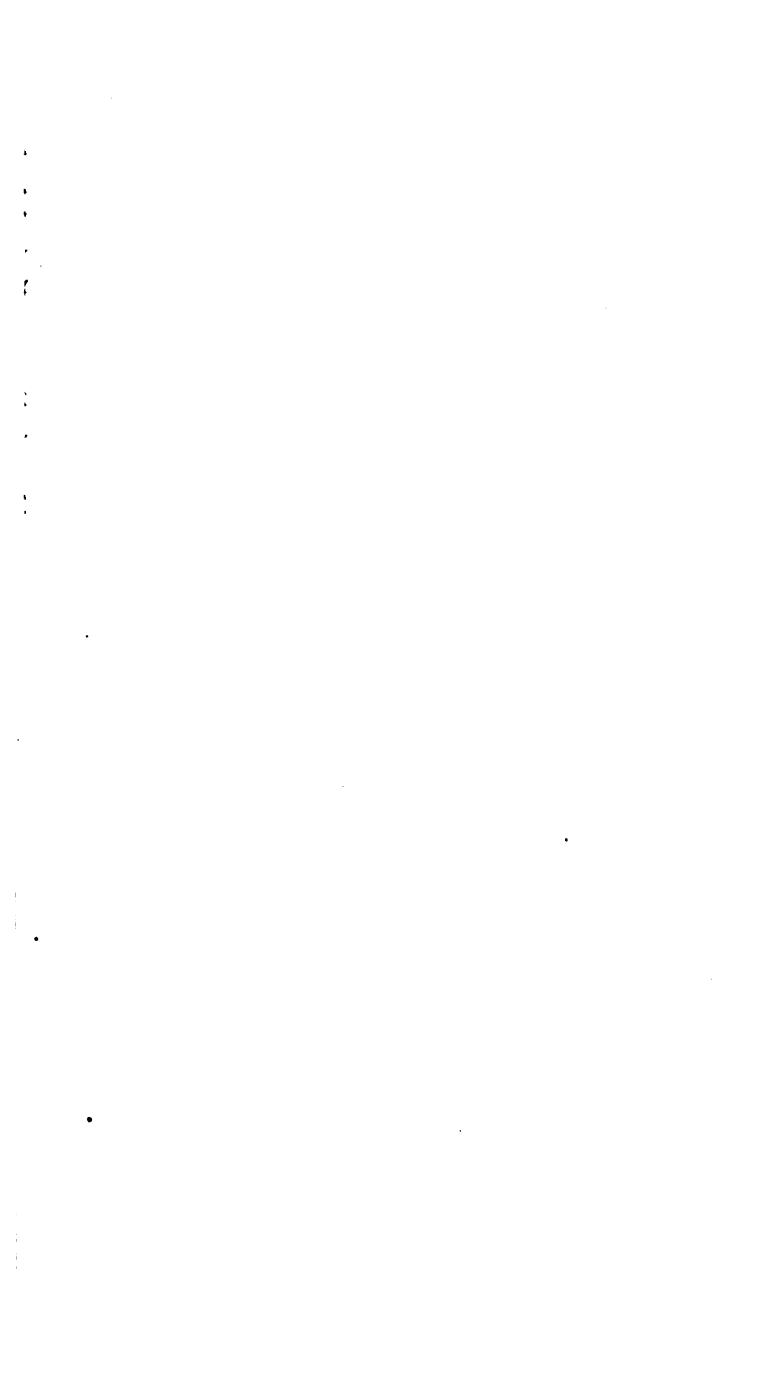
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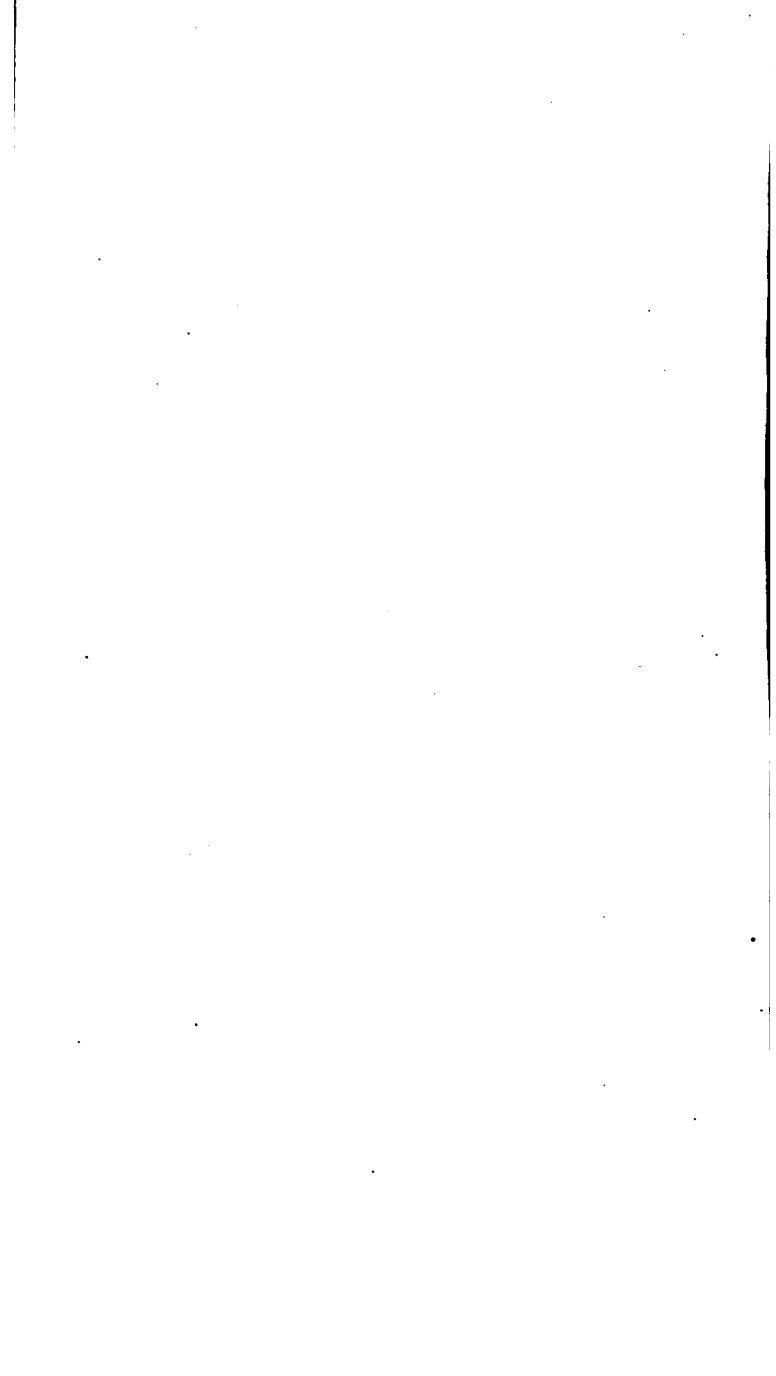












THE HISTORY  
OF  
THE CULDEES ;  
THE  
ANCIENT CLERGY OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

A.D. 177—1300.

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BY THE  
REV. DUNCAN M'CALLUM,  
AUTHOR OF THE "GAELIC CHURCH HISTORY," ETC.

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TO HIS GRACE

GEORGE, DUKE OF ARGYLE,

HEREDITARY MASTER OF THE QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD ;

KEEPER OF THE CASTLES OF DUNOON, DUNSTAFFNAGE,  
AND CARRICK ;

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## PREFACE.

A history of the Culdees, the ancient British Clergy, should be most interesting to all believers who love the truth as it is in Jesus. The character of the Culdees stood high for piety and learning. When the Gospel was not taught in its purity through Christendom, the light of the Word shone on the British Isles, and emanated from Iona—a small isle of the Hebrides—into foreign parts. When we consider the dark ages, in which vital religion was little known, how bright this great light must have been that shone amid such darkness. It was the Word of God, the Bible, wholly and exclusively taught by the Culdees, with the zeal and in the simplicity of the apostles of Jesus Christ. The Culdees had their learning through human means, and so had all nations that submitted to the sway of the Romans, and were made provinces of the vast empire; but the latter read not the Scriptures,

nor adhered to the faith once delivered to the saints. Many rites and foreign dogmas bewildered the mind, and withdrew the attention from the important subject.

It has been matter of surprize to many, that the origin, and even the name of the Culdees, were so little known as to have occupied so small a portion of ecclesiastical history during the long period of twelve centuries. The Romish writers, in mentioning the British Clergy, made use of terms familiar to them, as proper names of men and offices in their Church. The Venerable Bede makes a small distinction, but which is not enough to distinguish them from the Clergy of the Church of Rome, whose writings have been so universally published, and so long in use. In later times the Culdees were believed to have been monks and abbots, and it is yet thought by many that they really belonged to the Church of Rome. In the following chapters special care has been taken to point out the mistake, and to show how widely Culdees and monks differed.

The sufferings of the Culdees merited sympathy, and their endurance, approbation; it was the Word and the Spirit alone that enabled them to continue

faithful in the service of their Master; doing, by divine grace, the greatest good to the young and the old, by their learning and knowledge. But their trials and troubles were sanctified to them, while they walked in the steps of Him who was going about continually doing good. They were humbled, but not subdued. Many eminent men arose among them, and their labours produced much fruit.

In composing the following narrative, all possible search has been made to ascertain the true history of so interesting a body of Christians. Several works consulted, afforded little information; and if quoted, it would be to refute the statements made in them. Authors of high standing are marked on the margin; yet we must say that we are not disposed to agree with them in all particulars.

As the British clergy were learned, they must have written on the Church, and subjects connected with her; they had eminent men in Ireland, and in the West of Scotland; but their writings might have been lost in times of trouble and persecution, and the policy of the all-engrossing Church would have destroyed any monuments that remained of men who strenuously opposed papal aggression. After having used his utmost endeavours to give a plain, short,

and explicit account of the Culdees, the Author is sensible of not coming up to his desire ; but it is not his part to judge of his labours.

The Notes in the Appendix he expects will be interesting to some of his readers ; though in short notices, so much as those subjects deserved, could not be said of the two great nations who first peopled the Western world. The account given of the Druids will appear curious and interesting to those who have not had access to know their history. Their antiquity, their influence, and studies, will not be contemplated with indifference ; but their fall, under adverse fortune, proves that they placed not their hope, like the Culdees, upon Him who is all powerful.

# HISTORY OF THE CULDEES.

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## CHAPTER I.

Persecution, a means of spreading the Gospel.—It began at Jerusalem ; extended to Rome ; from whence Christians fled to Britain.

A great persecution rose at Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen. The Jews could not bear the accusation of putting to death the Lord of life and glory. They would not hear the apostles preach the resurrection of Christ,—they were determined to suppress the voice that proclaimed peace on earth ; but they caused the glad-tidings to be farther and wider spread. How vain and sinful are the attempts of men against the will of God !

Some of the apostles went to Samaria, and approved of the preaching of the Gospel there. The saints, as the believers in Christ were then called, went hither, and travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, where they were first denominated “ Christians.” They preached to none but the Jews ; and the Gospel soon spread through all Jewry. But the light of the Word soon rose also on the Gentiles. The new religion was Catholic. A vision appeared to Peter, to convince him and the other apostles that the nations were to receive the glad tidings. Christianity rapidly spread among the idolators. In the first ages of Christianity its progress was wonderful. Multitudes in whose hearts

were deeply rooted the superstition of their fathers, were converted. No human agency could have produced so great results. Were the ministers of the New Testament to be the greatest orators, and the most influential statesmen, could they have effected so great a change in what had been established for ages? The apostles, Paul excepted, were the disciples of Christ; they were called by him from a low state. They were illiterate, nor were they distinguished by great natural powers.

Paul, who was converted by Christ, while madly persecuting his followers, from a persecutor became a zealous preacher of the Gospel; he was learned and eloquent; and by the Holy Spirit spread the light of truth among the Gentiles. He was styled their Apostle.

As the new religion was widely spread through the Roman empire, the rulers became alarmed, lest they would cause insurrections; as the Jews were not submissive to their sway, but seized every opportunity to throw off a yoke which, as a free people, they could ill bear. The Romans regarded the Christians as a sect of the Jewish persuasion, that were also persecuted by their own nation. They entertained the most unfavourable opinion of them. They were adverse to innovations in religion, as well as in government. Although they tolerated the ancient faith of the Jews, they would not bear any modern deviation from the established one. Tacitus, their philosophic historian, calls Christianity a pernicious superstition, (*exitiabilis superstitio*.) It is surprising to hear priests and philosophers allege vices and crimes against Christians, who were the most moral and peaceable in society. They were grossly calumniated, and they were believed to be blameable, though

no evidence could be shown to their prejudice. When Nero set fire to the eternal city, he threw the blame on the Christians, knowing how ready were all to accuse them ; and although in this instance the Romans were convinced of their innocence, and that the emperor himself was the incendiary, they were made to suffer.

The Christians were accused of bad practices. Every thing said of them, though absurd as well as untrue, had been credited, or supposed to be true. No trouble was taken to ascertain whether they were guilty or not. But Pliny, who knew the Christians better, as they were in his province, declares that he could find no fault in them, nor in what they professed, and that they were amiable and useful members of society.

We mean not to speak of the ten persecutions that began in the year of our Lord 65, and continued to A.D. 303, nearly two centuries and a-half, with intervals of repose ; and during which period of time, they suffered not always with the same rigor. The Roman emperors were not alike cruel and unrelenting. Yet the Christians were not always safe under the mildest government. It would be appalling to humanity to present pictures of tortures, that had been exhibited to a nation who were not remarkable for their sensibility. They who could fly from persecution were, however, allowed to escape ; and they hesitated not to go among barbarians, as the wildest beasts of the forest could not be more cruel than their persecutors. Writers of authority tell us how far and wide Christians were spread. They were soon known among all nations. Irenæus affirms that in his time, the Egyptians, the Lydians, the Celts, the Germans, and many others, received the new religion. The preaching of the truth



was enlightening men everywhere, who were willing to receive true knowledge. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that in his time Christianity was known among all nations; and Tertullian says: "In whom else have nations believed, but in Christ who lately came; and all the borders of Spain, the different nations of Gaul, and those parts of Britain that the Romans could not reach, even these nations were subjects of Christ." These were the North Britons, that never yielded to the Roman legions. Christians who apprehended danger after arriving in the south of the island, advanced on their way, in the second century, to the north, to be out of the reach of their persecutors. "The Sarmatæ also, the Daci, the Scythians, and many other obscure tribes, with many provinces and islands scarcely known to us, in all these the name of Christ, late as he came, reigns."

Thus Christianity obtained in the first two centuries the name of the prevailing religion, to the astonishment of friends and foes. And by what means? By the instrumentality of obscure persons of low degree; not countenanced by the great, nor aided by the opulent. It required not the growth of idol-worship, the wisdom of philosophers and legislators, nor the weapons of the followers of Mohammed. The apostle of the Gentiles tells us that his speech and preaching were not the enticing words of men's wisdom, but the demonstration of the Spirit of power.

We see how the influences of the greatest empire of the world were combined against a poor, despised, misrepresented people, for a religion that is divine, that gives hope to the penitent, and consolation to the afflicted. However, the rulers of the earth could not prevail; a higher power unknown to them ruled all.

The Roman emperors conquered kingdoms and subdued nations, reducing them to provinces, and adding them to their overgrown state ; they vanquished the most warlike tribes ; yet the more they persecuted the followers of Christ with a determination to extirpate them, the more they increased, and the wider was their religion spread. A clear evidence of the divine origin of the pure and spiritual religion of Jesus Christ. "The blood of martyrs became the seed of the Church."

The Romans extended their wide empire almost over the known world, leaving little hope to the Christians to get beyond the reach of their power. Though an opportunity offered, how could they escape ? They were not safe in the most distant provinces. In some of them they might chance to be under a milder government, as we shall see they experienced in Britain.

As we have already observed, the persecutors were not alike cruel. Some governors and rulers were touched with the feelings of humanity, who would be glad to let Christians escape ; and into whatever part of the world they could fly, how happy would they think themselves while they entertained the hope of imparting to fellow-men the news of salvation through the eternal Son of God, that souls might be gained to the Father of mercies. But the Christians that were offered pardon were they to lay incense on the altar of heathen deities, would not, to avoid inevitable death, yield to the temptation, however easy, as the Pagans thought, was it to have performed all that was required of them. The Christians thought otherwise, and would have suffered the greatest tortures, and the most cruel death, sooner than contaminate the pure religion they professed, with any abomination of idolatry. And they suffered and endured

ineffable tortures, with a spirit which their persecutors designated obstinacy.

When Christians fled to Britain, they could entertain but small hope of escaping under the sway of the Romans, and some of them went beyond it, where they found shelter from a people indomitable, and rendered fiercer by continual wars ; yet, not forgetful of the hospitality of their ancestors, nor without sympathy for persecutors, as their own priests were denounced. They cherished no good will toward the "king of the world," the Roman emperor, whose legions shed so much of their blood. Their own priests, such as survived the massacre of Anglesea, and escaped to the north, proceeded farther than the first Christians. They were on the decline. And the Gael, who might not be capable of making a distinction between their superstition, the mysteries of which, being unknown to them, readily received the new religion. Natural religion having been implanted in the human constitution, all tribes and nations have a sense of it, though perverted. The mind of man must be imbued with it, under whatever modification their age and habits may make it appear. The Gael, in general, embraced Christianity.

## CHAPTER II.

The Culdees.—Etymology of the term.—The Scriptures.

It is not a little extraordinary, that while all have heard of the Culdees, and their piety and learning, that their origin, and even the name, should be unknown. They were Christians who fled from the persecution of the Romans, that the Britons called *Culdich*. The Britons were from Gaul, and spoke the language of the Celtæ, dialects of which are, the British, Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic. The root of the term *Culdich*, is *cul*, *cuil*, retreat, and *dich*, *ich*, the refugees, who sought place of concealment ; *Culdich*, *Anglicé*, Culdees.

It is not a little surprising how writers pass over what is plain and obvious, and seek a far-fetched and discordant meaning. Of the many derivations and etymologies of *Culdees*, we shall only mention what two writers have adduced. The learned George Buchanan, who was not ignorant of the British, but was the first Latin scholar of his age, would derive the term from that language, viz. *Cultores Dei*, (worshippers of God.) Dr John Smith, an eminent Gaelic scholar, calls them *Gille De*, (servants of God.) Though the appellation literally means fugitives, it was not given to those who fled from persecution, as a term of contempt ; it was an appropriate term in their language, and, in the sense applied, meant refugees.

The term was soon appropriated to those who taught

the Christian religion to the Britons. The rest and all that were converted were Christians. The teachers assumed no higher title than elders, *natu majores*. They were afterwards denominated the British Clergy, in their controversies with those of the Church of Rome ; but were in general known by the term Culdees.

A confusion of ideas, and erroneous opinions generally existed regarding the Culdees, and at the present time, they are commonly supposed to have been monks ; although the slightest consideration might convince that they must have been very different from these, as they never had any connexion with the Church of Rome. It is agreed by all writers, ancient and modern, that Christianity was introduced into great Britain in the second century ; and, as far as can be ascertained, into South Britain, in the year of our Lord 177. The Scriptures were then known, and circulated among Christians ; we mean especially the New Testament. The gospels and epistles were read and approved by those who were acknowledged to be competent judges of the correctness of them. They were rendered so complete, that nothing more was to be added to, or taken from them. The primitive Christians of the British Isles possessed them in their approved state. Their teachers, the Culdees, taught from them, as it also had been the practice of pastors of churches every where during the ages of persecution. It was the good fortune of the British clergy and Christians to have been separated from the great body of Christians abroad after the persecution of the Romans ceased, and Christianity became the religion of the state. They lived in the simplicity of the first ages of Christianity, during a long series of centuries.

How Christians that fled from persecution into many and distant places, whose language and superstitions were unknown to them, communicated the knowledge of the Scriptures, and spread the light of truth among them, we attempt not to explain. We see how the apostles spoke in various tongues to the nations assembled at Jerusalem. And we learn from the Scriptures how individuals have been illuminated by the Spirit. But as the Culdees made no pretensions to the power of working miracles, we shall endeavour to show how they instructed the people, and delivered the pure doctrine of the Gospel, by the talents given them, and the light and influence of the Spirit, that will be imparted to all sincere and zealous teachers of the truth as it is in Jesus.

## CHAPTER III.

## Circumstances favourable to the Culdees.

Although the Britons spoke the Celtic, the language of the Romans was partially spoken in all the provinces of the south of the island. The subdued Britons were settled in villages, into which learning was introduced by the conquerors, and the arts were taught. The first Christians, therefore, might be understood by the natives of the island, so far as the Roman sway extended. Their zeal and indefatigable labours in spreading the Gospel, converted numbers; some of these would have accompanied the teachers who travelled northward, and acted as interpreters.

In the more distant parts of the island the inhabitants were illiterate. The knowledge of letters was shut from the people by the Druids, as the scriptures have been from the Papists. But what is now called Scotland, was not entirely unsubdued by the Roman legions, who penetrated through the woods of Caledonia, as far as Lochness.

But the Culdees and those whom they converted, conducted themselves in such a quiet and prudent manner, as to have attracted little notice. The rulers were not alarmed, as the mild spirit of the Christian religion inspired peace and amity among all ranks of society. There was no attempt at insurrection in all the provinces, and foreign wars withdrew the care and attention of those

who governed, from those who worshipped their Maker without external ceremonies and imposing spectacles. The Britons had no philosophers whose pretensions the Culdees called in question, nor heathen priests whose temples were forsaken on account of the prevailing religion. The jealousy of the magistrates, superior and inferior, were not incited, where there was not the least appearance of tumult. The philosophers made no appeal to the rulers for their despised wisdom, nor the polytheists for the contempt thrown on their false gods. Neither of them roused the furious passions of a superstitious multitude, that urged the persecutors to the most atrocious actions.

In the absence of so many enemies, though within the reach of Roman power, the primitive Christians in this island enjoyed privileges unknown in other provinces of the great empire. And the progress made by zealous teachers in spreading the light of the Gospel over the land, was great and commensurate to those favourable circumstances.

The Culdees were not, however, always free of apprehension, as some emperors and governors of provinces overlooked not the most distant parts of the empire. But wars occurred in foreign parts that withdrew their thoughts and projects to extirpate Christianity, that so evidently was superseding superstition and idolatry, and less rigorous rulers succeeded them, and prevented the calamity that might have fallen upon men who possessed no human power to protect them.

In the reign of Galerius and Marcinus, persecution against the Christians was put in force in all the provinces of the Roman empire ; but they suffered less in Britain than in other countries, as Constantius



governed here. Though he at first was obliged to execute the law, it was with the greatest reluctance. When he was raised to the rank of Cæsar, he could throw a shield of protection over the Christians, so that from the year 177 to 440, being more than two centuries and a half, the Christians in Britain comparatively suffered not greatly from persecution. Not that men in power were friendly to them, Constantius excepted ; but, owing to the circumstances mentioned above, and their own submissive nature, they escaped much of the fiery trials of persecution.

When Constantine, son of Constantius, reigned, he made Christianity the religion of the state ; persecution ceased in the whole empire and all its provinces.

Though we have no records of these times by which to ascertain the numbers of Christians in Britain, we may infer that they were not few, though the Britons of the south of the island had only the elders to instruct them ; yet we know from the history of succeeding persecutions, that all the natives were not Christians. The Anglo-Saxons who resolved and succeeded in subduing the Britons, wreaked their vengeance chiefly on the Christians, and their priests cherished a spirit that was most adverse to the Culdees.

## CHAPTER IV.

## The Druids persecuted by the Romans.

As Julius Cæsar met no Druids in Britain, it has been asserted by some that there were none in the British isles ; and others, not taking the trouble of enquiring into the truth, satisfied themselves by saying that they and their superstition vanished before the light of the Gospel. And there were writers too, who avowed that the Druids and Culdees were the same. This requires explanation. The Celtæ, the Gauls, Britons, and all tribes of the great nation, had their priests the Druids. They were well known under their various official designations. If Cæsar met not Druids as priests, or teachers of youth, the functions whereof were performed in the secrecy of groves, and the privacy of caves, they met him as the *vergubreti*, or judges. They were the most powerful, and firmest established in the state. They, while retired into secret places with their pupils, guided the movements of all public affairs, and were the *primum nobile* of government.

When Cæsar waged war in Gaul, the Druids retired into Britain, and fixed on Mona, or Anglesea, as the seat of learning. It was so celebrated that the youth of the mother country were sent there to study at the famous college. The natives of Germany, and of other countries, also sent young men thither, that they might be thoroughly instructed in the mysteries of Druidism. All the Celtic tribes of every country were under their sway, and submitted to be ruled by them.

Although the great nation, as they were composed of small states, or sects, separated into various regions of the western world, might be conquered by the warlike and politic Romans, they could not be easily subdued while the Druids influenced their actions. The Romans, whose ambition rose with their power, and would have subjected all the nations of the earth under their sway, were aware of the magical power which the Druids exercised over the Britons, and of the indomitable spirit they inspired in their breasts. Julius Cæsar, as Tacitus says, discovered Britain, but did not conquer it. After his departure, little was done to establish the Romans in Britain, for the space of about a hundred years. The emperors and rulers were determined to subjugate the Britons, and make them submissive to their authority, but they were aware that the Druids must have been extirpated ere that could be effected. They could not receive Druidism, as they were accustomed to take other superstitions into their polytheism. The severe studies of the Druids, their great learning, and knowledge of human affairs, were solemnized and strengthened by the mysteries of religion, that were kept a profound secret. So that the emperors, it was evident, must first strike at the root of the stock, whose branches were spread large and wide, that they might sway the Celtic tribes.

The philosophers and priests needed not to concern themselves about the occult and pretended knowledge of the Druids, as they were not allowed to be promulgated among the people; but the grasp the Celtic priests held on the mind was not unknown to the rulers. The charm must be broken and the spell dissolved, ere the tribes could be amalgamated.

The first decree against the Celtic priests was enacted by Augustus, under the plausible pretext of punishing them for offering human sacrifice ; but, in reality, to destroy their influence in the state, which had been so ramified as to have extended through all the tribes in every soil. The Roman policy was to subdue all obstinate opinions, as well as conquer all superior power. As edicts were published against the Druids, they were denounced ; but the Roman arms alone could have effected the demolition of the system. The people venerated their priests, who were regarded by them as divinities. They would have concealed and protected them. The seclusion and secrecy of the Druids eluded for some time the pursuit of the ministers of vengeance ; but the far famous College of Anglesea was too well known to have escaped unnoticed, and the sea-girt residence presented no barrier inaccessible to the commander of the legions. It was in the year of our Lord 61 that Suetonius, as we learn from Tacitus, destroyed the famous College of Anglesea, and the numerous druidical temples. He was well aware that the obstinacy of the Britons proceeded from the influence of the Druids, and he turned his forces against them. Tacitus says,\* that Suetonius Paulinus prepared to invade Mona, an island full of inhabitants, and a retreat of fugitives. For this purpose he caused the ships to be made with flat bottoms, for a steep uncertain shore. In these he conveyed over the infantry, and the cavalry followed by fording in deep water, swimming and floating the horses. On the shore stood a motley group of armed men, mixed with women running up and down among them, dressed like furies in black garments, their hair dishevelled, and

\* Tacit. Ann. xii. pp. 38, 40.

torches in their hands. The Druids also attended, lifting up their hands to heaven, and uttering dreadful execrations. The Roman army, seized with superstitious terror, refused at first to advance, but their leader urged them onward, and the Druids and Druidesses made but a feeble resistance. A death-blow was given to their power. They never recovered from the shock. Their altars were overthrown, and their sacred groves fell beneath the axes of the legionaries. The priests, and priestesses were consumed in the flames which they had kindled for the destruction of the captives.

From this period might be dated the fall of the Druids; they declined henceforth. Their power was paralyzed, and they began to lose their influence over the minds of the people. Their religion gradually decayed, as the light of the gospel shone over the land.

“What is of earth is earthy.” It may endure for a time; but there will be an end of it. The origin of the new religion appeared on its increase, notwithstanding what emperors and governors, yea, and commanders of armies, could have done to effect its ruin. What could all the power of the eternal city have done against the Almighty? What the policy of men against the decrees of God?

Druidism had been as firmly established as was possible to human power, and pervaded all the departments of the state; who could have thought of a dissolution of the most vital part of the greatest nation of Europe? A power of a different kind arose, and prevailed over it, as we have seen, by physical force. But a moral power, surpassed both in influence and extent, and henceforth a ruling providence apparently presided over the affairs of men.

## CHAPTER V.

The state of the Britons when they received the new religion.

The Britons struggled long to maintain their liberty ; but the discipline of the legions finally prevailed, and though subjugated, were received as subjects of the empire in the provinces they made in the south of the island. They were taught letters and useful arts ; but they were destitute of religion. They lost their priests,—and would not be polytheists. The doctrines of the new religion accorded better with their former opinions. The Druids taught the unity of Diety, and the immortality of the soul ; but Christianity revealed to them the mysteries of the Gospel ; that appeared to them to be secrets that the Druids made it unlawful to make known to the people. There was also in the new religion what accorded better to their subjugated state than what the bards imposed on their spirits in their former state of liberty,—the virtues of a more amiable disposition, hitherto despised, or not countenanced. The Druids having declined from the prestage of their rank more than a hundred years before the arrival of the Christians in the island, they were almost forgot in the south ; in north Britain, where they lingered long, they still retained the grasp, though not so firmly, on the public mind.

One of the greatest barriers to the reception of Christianity was removed when the spell was broken ; and

the mind was freed from the thralldom of human devices. Hospitality was a virtue inculcated among all the Celtic tribes. The Britons were prepared to receive the strangers who fled hither with open arms. But there was more. They still remembered how their priests were persecuted. The parents related the circumstance to their offspring, and they sympathized with those who fled from the persecution of the very rulers who subdued and oppressed themselves. While they were obliged to submit, they could not divest themselves of the injustice received at the hands of those who ruled over them. Another consideration made them more friendly to the teachers of the new religion, and inclined more readily to adopt it. There was not in it a religion to the high and another to the low. The free born mind desires equality; and in the Christian religion this appears to the discerning. There is a principle of curiosity in man to pry into secrets. The Druids made it unlawful to divulge theirs to the people. The mysteries of the Gospel have been revealed. The Britons might have supposed them the same, and it was gratifying to their vain curiosity, to have been admitted into the secrets or mysteries which had been until then withheld from their view. However useful this principle might have been in the ages of discoveries, it has been the cause of inducing some to desire to come to the knowledge of things to which our limited capacities cannot attain; and led individuals to errors, that reason might have shown to be useless, if not sinful.

Revelation opened to the Britons another world, very different from their notions of the "noble island," the Celtic paradise, and in their condition more abundant in blessings than their heroes could have hoped to en-

joy in their elysium. While the mind was depressed, and the body enslaved, how could they have aspired to noble actions, the results and consequence of which would have been to waft their spirits or shades over seas, and airy regions, to the island of youthful pleasures and lasting happiness? The new religion was more adapted to their humiliated state; it taught submission, and encouraged them to hope in a better state. The qualities and dispositions that were regarded with contempt by a warlike people, were the most estimable in the character of the pious and godly. More consonant to the weakness and imperfections of human nature, the Christian religion represented not the weak and the poor as despised and to be rejected, or excluded from the assembly of the worthy, and showed that there were virtues to be cherished, that made men happier than magnanimity and heroism, and should be cultivated.

Though converts to Christianity were not to expect that the change would have restored them to their former freedom, and to enable them to throw off the galling yoke of their conquerors; they felt confident they were to enjoy liberty, of which their enemies could not deprive them. The consolations of the Gospel were great and manifold, and they began to appreciate what they inwardly felt. The influence of the divine spirit inclined them to hear the instruction, and to desire the knowledge that is imparted to true believers.

When reduced into submission, the Britons were taught lessons that their former austere priests could not impart to the afflicted mind. When in adverse circumstances, we find, if we consider aright, that instances occur to alleviate the spirit from a state of despondency,



or to induce the unfortunate to submit, when they cannot prevail. An all-ruling Providence ordains that good and ill may be balanced, and the former prevails not unfrequently where faith and hope are entertained. We say not, but similar instances might have occurred in other places in to which Christians fled from persecution. The Britons seemed at the time, prepared to receive the Gospel.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The advantages of the Roman Conquest.*

The Romans received into their empire the nations they conquered and subdued, and under their sway, these were entitled, or allowed to partake of the advantages which their government bestowed.

They were settled in villages, taught to cultivate the soil, to learn the arts that were necessary and beneficial, and they were instructed in letters. The young men they enrolled in their legions, and employed them in their wars. The Britons, as may be supposed, would not easily submit to the strict discipline of conquerors, but the teachers of the new religion, impressed on them that it was necessary to pay tribute to Cæsar. They through time became accustomed to peaceable habits. They lived in comfort, and enjoyed abundance of the necessaries of life, as may be inferred from the fact, that corn was exported from South Britain. They were made to labour the fertile soil, and were remunerated for their labours.

They who led a life of danger, and often experienced want in precarious circumstances, must have been sensible of the advantages enjoyed; and teachers would not fail in using these as arguments to make them thankful and resigned.

The chief advantage was learning and civilization. As their habitations were fixed, and the people congregated, and lived in villages, the arts flourished, and

society assumed a comfortable aspect. The learning imparted to them, confined them not to the long term of fifteen or twenty years. The pupils were not made to commit their acquirements to memory. The precepts and doctrines of the Gospel were taught in a more easy and intelligible manner. In the new religion, there were no strict vows of secrecy required. Reverence and holy fear were the impressions made on the souls of all who looked up to a Being who is glorious in holiness. The converted were willing to learn, and ready to comply with the rules and commands of the new religion, and they would have soon felt that the yoke was easy.

The advantages of this peaceable state were still increased by the excellent precept of the Gospel,—to requite evil with good ; and instead of looking to an earthly, they expected a heavenly habitation. These blessings, though proceeding from some of the advantages of the Roman Conquest, were not accorded to them by their rulers ; yet in the absence of idolatry, they were enjoyed ; so that the graces and virtues adorned the Christian character in the lowest state. The morality of the Christians, and their inoffensive manners, were observed and acknowledged, so that the condition of the Christian Britons, though under the Roman yoke, was not intolerable.

Even the foreign wars of the Romans contributed to the advantages of the Christians in Britain. While the legions were employed abroad, the instructions of the elders made the Britons observe peace at home. The rulers, finding them not given to innovation, permitted them to enjoy privileges which had been denied those who were not influenced by the Christian spirit, in other parts of the empire.

## CHAPTER VII.

The disadvantages of the Roman Conquest of South Britain.

The disadvantages of the Roman Conquest will be better seen hereafter; we shall only mention here a few of them, which led to the miseries that followed. The liberty which the Britons lost, was ill compensated in the end by all the advantages they received. The spirit of a warlike people was broken. They were deprived of their natural strength when their youth were taken away to foreign parts. They were made to labour for the commonwealth. The corn raised in their country by their toil and industry, was exported, and they received not the price. The fruit of their labour might have been only sufficient to pay the tribute imposed. While they were not in want, they could not divest themselves of the idea of being serfs, or in bondage. They were receiving the benefit of the instruction of Culdees; yet, much of the comfort and consolation of the Word was lessened by the state of fear they were kept in by the edicts that hung over them, and might be put in force.

Men that apprehend danger cannot enjoy happiness. Although the Britons who received the new religion had less to complain of than many others in the wide empire, during a period of more than two hundred years, the change of affairs in the empire itself occasioned greater and worse evils than were ever known.

When the Romans abandoned Britain, in the year

411, and left the peaceable inhabitants unprotected, they were not able to withstand the northern neighbours, being so long unused to arms, and accustomed to peace. The men of the north suffered from the Roman arms. They were inured to hardship—and rendered fierce by continual conflicts. The appeal the provinces made to the Romans availed them little. The once powerful and great nation, could render no assistance; they left the Britons they subdued and humbled, to their prayers and their tears. The youth, the strength of the nation, had been wasted in foreign wars. The Romans whose ambition grasped at the conquest of the world ; were no longer able to protect themselves against the invasion of barbarous nations.

When Agricola discovered Britain to be an island, he began to extend the Roman conquest northward. But the battle of the Grampians checked the career of the Roman legions. They gained the victory with small loss on their side, compared to the numbers that fell on the other, according to their historians ; yet the Caledonians were not subdued. They were taught a novel mode of warfare, by which Severus is said to have lost 50,000 of his men ; but the consequence was worse to the south Britons, on whom the fury of the sufferers of the foresaid engagement fell, when deserted by the Romans.

The state of affairs in the south was not long concealed from the natives of the north. They soon learned that the power of the “ king of the world ” was paralyzed. They were exasperated against his subjects who would have deprived them of liberty, as they had done in the south ; and they would now be revenged. The natives of the north envied the riches, the gold, and fine horses

of their invaders, and would participate in their wealth. It was just they should, when the Romans would have taken from them their land and liberty ; and their reasoning was plausible. The Britons, in the meantime, could not withstand the fury of their incensed invaders. They were settled down to peaceable habits. The conquerors were till now their protectors, as well as benefactors. While the Romans were extending their conquests everywhere, the provinces, as well as the empire, were thought to be secure. But now the subjugated Britons felt otherwise. They could no longer trust for aid from the Romans, and they had no resource in themselves. The easy manner in which the invaders obtained the spoil which they carried away, encouraged them to come back again for more, and look for the conquest of south Britain in their turn. They were fierce and warlike, unsettled, and greedy of booty. There were no obstacles in their way after they had overleaped the Roman walls. In an evil hour the Southerners threw their eyes on Germany, and sought assistance from nations that were foreign to their Celtic origin. The Anglo-Saxons came to their aid, and having united their forces, the Britons and auxiliaries routed the invaders, and put a stop to inroads from the north.

The strangers, as will be narrated in a following chapter, thought of seizing the land of those who invited them as friends and helpers ; and henceforth began the most cruel persecution of the Christians in the island of Great Britain. They were obliged to fly into Wales, North Britain, and Ireland. Much blood was shed, and the greatest calamities were suffered from the ruthless persecutors. The Culdees, however, were zealous in

teaching the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel wherever they went. Some fugitives had fled to Gaul. The province they occupied there, still retains the name Britagne, or little Britain. They, influenced and guided by the Spirit, regarded only the service of their Master. They travelled for the good of fellow-creatures, and ceased not amid troubles and trials to preach Christ at home and abroad.

## CHAPTER VIII.

South Britain invaded by the Scots and the Picts.

The natives who opposed the Romans, and fought their legions at the base of the Grampians, were only known to the latter as Caledonians, *Cæl daoine*,\* though they were two distinct nations, and maintained continual conflicts among themselves, namely, the Scots and the Picts. Their origin and character will be explained in the appendix. Common danger made them join their forces to oppose an enemy that would have easily subdued them singly, and would have made provinces of all the north as well as the south of the island.

It was extraordinary that two people so opposite and hostile should so easily unite, and so faithfully stand against the invading army, as to have been taken for one nation ; nothing short of dire necessity would have done it. But common sense dictated what policy would have rejected. The Romans were powerful, and liberty was dear as life to the inhabitants of the north, who never were conquered, or at least subdued. Yet it was more extraordinary that they should unite for plunder and conquest, about either of which they might disagree. The motive was less powerful ; still the practice and habits of the one, made them wade through

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\* *Cæl*, or *Gæl*, (*g* and *c* being mutable letters,) and *daoine*, men, means Gauls.



sea and land for spoil ; but the other was not impelled by the same lust, and likewise ought not to be indifferent to the state of the people of the south. Were they to consider it, there were two reasons that should have weighed with them. They were from the same country, and of the same kindred. They were also Christians, the Picts not. But where passion prevails, reason is disregarded. The Britons and the Gael were long separated, and many of the latter people might not yet have been enlightened by the knowledge of the Gospel.

The continual strife of the Scots and the Picts, and their war with the Romans, rendered them restless and indefatigable. As they were not always unsuccessful against so mighty an army, they might easily expect to conquer a timid, unprotected nation, who lost the spirit that inspired the Celtic tribes ; and being so long in the neighbourhood of people of different habits, they resembled the Gothic race more than the Celtic. We speak of the Scots who accompanied the Picts to the south.

If the Scots were not superior, they were equal to the Picts ; and although very different in other respects, here they were tempted by the hope of obtaining immense booty. The walls built between them and the southern nation was no fence against the impetus that impelled the Scots and the Picts, since no longer guarded by the legionaries. The Roman provinces in Britain were soon overrun by them. As they left the dispirited natives for a while in doubtful tranquillity, their return was ere long expected. But the Scots and the Picts, whether united by the fear of common danger, or the lust of spoil, were never mixed or associated

as one people. The superstition of the one, and the religion of the other, were as distant as the north and south poles. Their active habits were alike different. Their language, too, and their laws were dissimilar ; but all these differences were no safety to the Southernns. Their fertile soil was more desirable than the woods of Caledonia. The two nations conceived the scheme of enriching the one at the expense of the other, and then to leave the fruits of their common labours to be reaped by the strongest.

Their rapacity and cruelty must have been most grievous, though the sufferings they caused might have been exaggerated. The Britons had just cause to be alarmed ; but a little forethought might have made them look for resources in themselves. They might have thought of the resistance the people of the north made to the Roman arms, feel ashamed to have been so easily vanquished, and have roused themselves, and have assumed the spirit of the great nation of whom they descended. They had done all that when assailed by those who came to aid them, but they had done it when too late. While the Scots and Picts were invading the south of the island, other parts of the fertile land were visited by pirates and adventurers, so that the inhabitants lost heart, and could conceive no other way to secure themselves, than by applying to warlike nations, who were but too glad to respond to their call.

As the Picts were still pagans, it may be a matter of surprise that the Culdees, who were so zealous in imparting knowledge, had not converted, at least, some of them. This requires some explanation. The two nations were always at war, except at two intervals of time, as already mentioned. They would not suffer any

intercourse between them, especially if religion was made the subject. In the tumult of battles and the keen appetite of rapine, that was forgot. The stronger passion always prevails in the unenlightened. It would not be safe, not to say prudent, for the elders to go into the camp of the enemy. While the one nation was intent on the destruction of the other, it could not be expected that either of them would have listened to cool reasoning ; and eloquence and argument would have been lost on those who looked to present profit, regardless of the means to be used.

## CHAPTER IX.

The Anglo-Saxons persecute the Christians of South Britain.

Vortigern was chosen leader of the Britons in 445. He was a weak prince. The Britons at the time required a ruler of enterprize and ability. They were left to their own resources, which Vortigern knew not how to turn to advantage. He looked to Germany for assistance, as he could entertain no hope from any other quarter. It was in 449 he took the fatal step which led to the ruin of the monarchy. The weak, impolitic prince, called the Anglo-Saxons to his assistance. Various accounts have been given of the manner in which these strangers were invited. It is unnecessary to mention them. The strangers responded to the call ; they hesitated not in crossing the sea ; and by their aid, and superior skill in war, the Scots and Picts were repulsed and expelled from the south. The unfortunate prince was grateful. He amply rewarded the Anglo-Saxons for their services. They were certainly worthy of the bounty of a thankful prince, when there was plenty land for the inhabitants, and to spare ; the strangers settled on what was allotted to them. It was easy to give land in possession, but not so easy to remove the possessors. This was an error that was not foreseen by the ruling powers, and which was discovered by the natives when it was too late. They dearly suffered for the fault of one who was an unworthy leader ; but the

Christians suffered most. A fierce persecution followed that of Valerius and Septimus.

About forty years after the dissolution of the Roman government, Vortigern had obtained the supreme, though precarious command of the provinces and cities of South Britain. He was very unfit for the discharge of the duties that became incumbent on him, and was justly blamed for the mischievous policy of inviting a formidable stranger to his aid, in repelling the inroads of his northern neighbours. A warlike prince would have roused the people, and taught them to assume arms instead of implements of industry, to which they had become accustomed under the sway of the Romans.

The Anglo-Saxons were not the first possessors of Germany. They were of the Sarmatians, who first appeared on the north of Europe, and seized many regions of the western world, which were thinly peopled by the great Celtic nation. Hengist and Horsa, two brothers, were the leaders of these Germans. They, having joined the natives, soon inspired them with a portion of their warlike spirit. The northern invaders then found they had to deal with armies fiercer and more bloody than the Romans. They were convinced that they could not easily grasp at the rich lands and wealth they desired. They abandoned their projects in the south, and betook themselves to their former practices of making reprisals on each other. The South Britons thus relieved from the fierce assailers of the north of the island, soon found they had worse enemies in the bosom of the kingdom.

The brothers served Vortigern faithfully during the space of six years, and were sufficiently remunerated for their services by lands on which they settled. Having

had permission to solicit reinforcements from time to time, the country became inundated by strangers, who would not be satisfied with less than all the rich country which they freed of invaders: though an adequate part was gratefully bestowed on them, they would have the whole. They found themselves, by the continual levies that augmented their forces, in a condition to make good their demand, and to seize on the entire of South Britain. The representations which they sent from time to time to their friends of the fine country they had, as they fondly anticipated, in their grasp, encouraged so many to cross the seas, as left their own country desolate. The unsettled state of nations in those times, who roamed over boundless regions, was favourable for the removals that so frequently took place, and their state of society enabled them to separate and unite with the greatest ease, and in the shortest time. The Britons became alarmed when too late. The strength and numbers of the Anglo-Saxons threatened sudden ruin. The strangers being refused a supply of corn, a sudden quarrel arose between them; they had recourse to arms; war commenced, and lasted during the period of a hundred and thirty years. The Britons seeing they were to be deprived of their land and liberty, determined to struggle to the last, and not to give up all to the usurpers.

Vortigern discovered, when he could not correct it, the fault into which he fell. The auxiliaries soon perceived his weakness, and conceived they had a better right to possessions which the northern neighbours would have wrested from him, had they not come to his aid. They considered they themselves were more worthy of the land which they preserved from furious

invaders,—lands that were left a prey to the strongest of the Roman legions. The people being sensible of the weakness of their sovereign, deposed Vortigern, and elected Vortimer his son in his stead. The young chief dying soon afterwards, they wanted a man of talent and high birth to fill his place; they failed in obtaining such a commander, and Vortigern was restored to his throne. A valiant prince would have yet retrieved the ruinous affairs of the state; but the experience of the past rendered Vortigern no more sagacious nor braver in future. Horsa fell in battle, but his brother Hengist aspired to the conquest of Britain.

Two other nations of Germany joined the Anglo-Saxons. The successive colonies that issued during a hundred years from the mouth of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine, were principally composed of three valiant tribes, or nations of Germany. The Jutes, the Old Saxons, and the Angles. The last two sent their successive forces to Britain. The primitive Saxons at the end of 400 years, produced the first monarch of South Britain. The Angles were distinguished by their numbers, and their success, and claimed the honour of fixing a perpetual name on the country. So great were the numbers that left their own country, that 300,000 obeyed the summons of Hengist. Yet he was obliged to have recourse to stratagem to subdue the Britons. He proposed to make peace with the natives, and appointed a meeting for the purpose. They were to carry no arms on the occasion. The perfidious German made his friends conceal arms under their garments, while they were to rise on a signal given by him. The conference began, and the horn of festivity went round, when, at the terrible exclamation, out rushed Saxon

weapons. The unarmed Britains fell before the inexorable assassins, and three hundred of the most influential men of the country were said to have perished. Yet the Britons were not to be easily subdued. They were not ignorant of the manufacture of arms. They made a long stand, until the continent of Europe yielded to the barbarians. The last victory of Hengist was in 473. He died in 488. His son Aesca succeeded him.

The British island, unaided, maintained a vigorous though unsuccessful struggle with the formidable pirates, who simultaneously attacked the eastern and the southern coasts. The Britons occupied the western coast more than a century. They still supported their national freedom, which survived the heptarchy and even the monarchy of the Saxons. The bravest warriors, who preferred exile to slavery, fled to Gaul, and occupied a north-west province that still bears their name, as mentioned in a preceding chapter ; many went to the remotest parts of the British islands, spreading the light of the Gospel.

The Saxons, regardless of all rights, hated the valour of the enemies, disdained the faith of parties, and violated without remorse the most sacred objects of Christianity. The state of the British Church was then in the most deplorable condition. The superstitious and idolatrous conquerors nearly extinguished the light of the gospel. They put immense numbers to death. The Britons were massacred without distinction of age or sex. The barbarians extirpated the arts and religion from the land. The heaviest blow fell upon the Christians, who retreated wherever they found shelter, teaching Christ crucified in regions thinly peopled, and little



cultivated. The practice, if not the memory of the followers of Jesus Christ was abolished in the greater portion of South Britain. The Culdees were safer among the fiercest tribes, or the wildest woodlands, than in the country of their fathers. Having lost their possessions, and enduring unspeakable hardships, they put their trust in Him who is alone able to relieve and save. They had the consolations of the gospel to solace them in their afflictions, and they received new strength to their weakness. Though the persecution of the Anglo-Saxons fell as an overwhelming flood on the Culdees in South Britain, still some remained in the provinces, teaching the pure doctrine of the Word of God wherever they could assemble, and escape the observation of their implacable foes. This violence of persecution was not alike destructive in all places.

The great nation that first appeared in the north of Europe, and spread themselves so widely over the west and south, were fiercer than the Celts, and their superstitions were darker and more bloody. This was owing to their priests, so unlike the Druids, who enlightened the nation, and in a high degree civilized their manners. What was the religion or superstition of the Sarmatians or Tuetones, before the Christian era, it is not easy to say. Odin's, or Woden's age has been placed in the third century of Christianity. From him the genealogy of the gods and heroes of the Anglo-Saxons was derived. Odin, the chief deity of the Scandinavians, was the god of the Scythians; Segga, a Scythian prince, is said to have undertaken a distant expedition, and after subduing several of the Sarmatian tribes, to have penetrated to the northern part of Germany, and from thence into Scandinavia.

He assumed the honours of divinity, and the title of Odin, his national god. He conquered Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and gave wise and salutary laws to the nations he had subdued by his arms. Anterior to his time, all these nations were a savage and bloody race. Beside Odin, their other deities were Hertha, who was benign. Faul was an evil deity ; Elfa, a fancied female, handsome, and mother of a numerous brood of the same light-bodied progeny of elves. The northern tribes were cruel and bloody. Their heaven was Valhalla, where they joined their god Odin. Their chief happiness was to drink ale from the skull of their enemy. The religion of the Anglo-Saxons was not on the decline when they came to Britain. There was no edict against their priests. They suffered no persecution from a more powerful people ; they, therefore, had no sympathy for others. They could not feel for those who were persecuted. But they hesitated not to inflict the greatest pains on those who differed from them ; and the Culdees were sure to suffer under their heaviest blow.

It were vain to attempt to convert so fierce and untractable enemies. And yet we find that what the Culdees dared not attempt had been effected by votaries of the Church of Rome, through the instrumentality of monks, aided by a queen. This wonderful change had been effected in 596.

The Church of Rome now began to be powerful. The fall of the Roman empire were the ruins on which she built, as her votaries aver, her infallibility. The Roman pontiff at this period of time, threw his eye on Britain. The Romans, when all powerful, by adding subdued nations to their empire, were of insatiable am-

bition. No less than the whole world would satiate their lust of conquest. The Romish clergy were no less ambitious ; they succeeded as well, and have maintained their ground with deeper policy. To the religion they professed, they added from superstition and idolatry, together with their own inventions, what were suited best to forward their progress. No obstacle thrown in their way could oppose or retard them. To bring the votaries of Odin within the pale of their church, might be regarded as an attempt the most difficult, if not entirely impossible ; and yet they accomplished it.

## CHAPTER X.

## A Brief Account of the Origen, and Lives of the Monks.

We shall give a short account of the origin and progress of the monks, which, compared with the Culdees, will show how widely they differed. The monks and Culdees had their origin from the same cause ; namely, the persecution of the Romans, from which they alike fled. In all other respects they totally differed.

In the Dacian persecution, about the middle of the third century, the fury of the storm that burst forth, extended to the extreme provinces of the empire. Many persons in Egypt fled to the mountains and deserts, wherever they found a safe retreat, and had leisure for heavenly contemplation. This manner of life, which was begun from necessity, became through time so agreeable to them, that they would not return to their former habitations, when no longer in fear of persecution, but had chosen to continue in the cells they excavated, and the huts they raised in the wilderness, which were low and pitiful dwellings. Their means of subsistence were poor and precarious. They chiefly lived on the roots of herbs, and what wild fruits they could gather. Some of them were called fathers of the Christian hermits. They lived not in bodies, or communities of men, embracing the lives that might

make existence tolerable ; no monasteries were yet built, nor were regular societies formed that were guided by any rules of government. Their condition might be regarded as the most doleful in which rational beings could have been placed ; yet they preferred it to returning to the world, and they had their successors.

The professed objects of the monks, the successors of those Christian hermits, was to attain a higher degree of holiness. It was for this end they withdrew from the world, vexed their bodies with long fasting, and painful austerities. They were ill clothed, they wore sackcloth, and were in the humblest and most wretched condition. In process of time, they instituted lengthened exercises of devotion, and began to form themselves into communities. They rose by degrees from their low state, and were formed into orders. In the peaceable reign of Constantine, they erected monasteries, in which communities of like persons resided. From these arose the regulars ; and their example was adopted in other parts of the world.

As the professed object of the saints who withdrew from the society of men, was to lead a life of holiness, they mortified the body, and inflicted pain on themselves by flagellation. Some lived in convents, who maintained themselves by manual labour. They practiced abstinence and mortification, which attracted notice, and incited admiration in those who observed them, which admiration their apparent sanctity long secured. This made many of the people desirous of following them. Bishops and inferior clergy, seeing the effect their singular mode of life produced, began to imitate their example, especially such as lived in cities and in the metropolis ; as is not seldom the case with

men to wish for a change, and desire to remove from the present to what they imagined a mere eligible place. So the dignitaries adopted monastic rules to the extent that was deemed compatible with the discharge of their duties. They were ambitious of the reputation gained by those who deserved the compassion more than the approbation of fellow-creatures. The monks believed, or rather wished to make others believe, that they were raised by their austerities to a holier or more exalted state. Numbers wandered from place to place as mendicants, and lived on alms. A large proportion of them indulged in the wildest extravagancies, both in opinion and practice, and soon forfeited all claim to scriptural piety. Such modes of living were adopted by women as well as men, and became very popular.

Through time, monasticism was distinguished by prosperity, and its usual attendant luxury ; riches were lavished on them by the ignorant and superstitious, who expected in return that they would propitiate Deity by their prayers and ceremonies, so as to be pardoned for their offences. Such was the darkness that spread a thick veil over the mind of the ignorant. The monks arrived at such a degree of sanctity in the estimation of the people, that they considered themselves safe from reproach, whatever their conduct might be ; so they indulged in their propensities to extremes, till they became as infamous for vice as the first orders were renowned for piety. Reformation was attempted to no purpose. Many new orders rose, at first professing great zeal for purity of manners. These adopted the strictest mode of discipline ; at times beyond what common nature could bear, but soon sunk into the lowest state of sensuality. Every order was under a vow to

the Church, and subject to the pope, although many were in opposition to each other, and became rivals ; as the Franciscans and Dominicans, the Jesuits and Jansenists ; so called from their respective leaders.

The monks spread themselves through all countries with a rapidity that was only equalled by the quick growth of their orders. From the smallest beginnings, and most destitute circumstances, arose so many orders, that they became so rich as to have almost surpassed the other clergy in luxury and vice. The transition from one state to another is wonderful in the influence produced on the mind. The venerable Bede, himself a monk, complains of the increase of monasteries, and of the profligacy of the monks. The third part of the land was said to be in their hands ; and not a small share of what they acquired went to the Church. They gave absolution to the wicked, and took their wealth in payment ; and their Church, of which they were most zealous, grew in affluence and power. It is inconceivable the effect their example had produced on the multitude. Yet the monks were more active and useful than their superiors. Being of a lower order, and mixing more with the common people than the dignified clergy, they were better acquainted with their condition, and could administer to their wants. If not more enlightened or better instructed, they knew much better what suited the capacities of the poor, while they were not unacquainted with the position and desires of the rich. They thus had in their power to do much good or evil. We need not say which predominated. The Romish writers are explicit enough on the subject. The monks were more capable of addressing an audience,

and were better able to preach to the congregation. They were the fittest of the clergy of Rome to be sent on missions and make converts ; consequently, the pope employed them in converting the Anglo-Saxons, in Britain. In this instance they surpassed the Culdees, who could not hope to enlighten the fierce enemies of their country and religion. But, as we shall soon see, the mission from Rome found an access through a queen, who used all the influence she possessed with her husband,

It may be curious to reflect on the state of mind of the monks and Culdees. At the beginning they were alike sensible of the corruption of human nature, and the weakness of the flesh, so liable to temptation ; but they applied to different sources for a remedy. The one had recourse to austerities, mortification of the flesh, and endeavoured to rise above the degraded state into which vice and sin brought mortals. They had too much confidence in the strength of an arm of flesh ; and their feelings and aspirations were a delusion, and they fell into a grosser state of errors, from the prestage their first fame gained them. So fickle is the mind when not settled on a sure foundation, that erring man is apt to turn from one extreme to another ; and this soon appeared in the life and manners of the monks.

The Culdees placed no confidence in the powers of man himself. They looked to a higher, in which was placed their hope. Their austerity of manners led to the cultivation of good morals, and their mortification in labouring for the bread they ate, by their own hands. They used, and did not abuse the bounties of nature. They prayed for grace, and were guided and influenced by the Holy Spirit ; while the mind was engaged in the exercise of rational devotion, the soul, the immortal part,



was thirsting after righteousness. They well knew what they themselves could do was most inefficient to gain them the crown of glory reserved for the righteous. They believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was not mere man, and being without sin, yielded perfect obedience to the will of God, which the first required ; but that no mere man since the fall of Adam could give.

While the Culdees would be burdensome to none, and would eat their bread by the sweat of their brow, their chief object was the propagation of the Gospel, and their zeal and delight to impart to others the glad tidings from heaven ; whence were their consolation amid trials, wants, and persecution. The work of the Lord prospered in their hands. When in the most depressed state, flying from the ruthless conquerors of South Britain, and virulent enemies of Christianity, they ceased not their labours of love ; nor were they silent. The light of the word which they preached was seen farther, and shone brighter in foreign lands.

The imposing mendicants soon invented new methods by which they might safely lay hold of sources to gratify their rapacity. We might have mentioned many ways in which they pursued them, but what is stated sufficiently shows that the monks and Culddees had no alliance whatever with each other.

## CHAPTER XI.

## The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by the Monks.

Persecution ceased in the great empire and all its provinces, when Christianity became the religion of the state. As might have been expected, multitudes, when not under the influence of fear, were converted into the new religion ; people were deserting the pagan temples, and were received into the bosom of the Church. But several were only changing their rites and ceremonies. These carried along with them their superstition and idolatry. Where the conversion was not from conviction, the change was merely external, and vital religion was wanting ; the heart remained the same.

The pagans had many inducements to profess Christianity. Instead of Christians being excluded from places of emolument and honour, these were laid open to them, and every encouragement was given them. Their numbers then increased amazingly, especially at Rome, the late scene of tortures inflicted on the faithful. But as the Christians increased in numbers, they relaxed in morals ; there was little difference in the lives and behaviour of converts. The government of the Church was also changing ; new rules and regulations were made and adopted. Men became more ambitious as they increased in wealth and power. This was becoming daily more apparent, as multitudes were converted, and many were rising to rank and influence. In none was

this more conspicuous than in the clergy, who were rising from the humble condition of the first Christians, who, amid trials and troubles, were faithful to their Master, and zealous in the good cause. The metropolitan bishop kept pace with the most prosperous rulers of the people ; he became the head of the Church, that is called Catholic, and believed by the credulous to be infallible ; though it has been disputed whether the infallibility is in the pope, or in the Church.

As the head of the Church of Rome advanced in rank and power, he became boundless in ambition. No conqueror of nations ever wished for more extensive sway. The emperors of Rome would have ruled over all the earth : the pope would over the temporal and spiritual worlds ; and how wonderful was his success, as he extended his conquest over the conscience ! Whatever motives might have been alleged, the fact produced the greatest results, as histories have recorded. A most extraordinary act we are just to relate, namely, the conversion of a people who were the most cruel persecutors of the Christians ever known, ruthless, and rapacious. After being amply remunerated for the services rendered to the Britons, they would have their kingdom also ; but their cruelties to the Christians exceeded barbarity.

Gregory the Great, then the head of the Church of Rome, threw his eye on the fair land of South Britain. The story of the English youth, whom he is said to have seen in the slave market, we pass over as another monkish fiction, that suited the taste of the times ; it was framed to exalt the character of the Roman pontiff, who, to the credulous of the dark ages, might have appeared to be the most disinterested and

holiest on earth. It was his zeal for the faith, as was alleged, that made him so desirous of making Christians of all pagans. It is known to all readers of ecclesiastical history, how the Church of Rome increased in wealth and grew in power ; every successive pope added to the magnitude, though not in equal degrees. Pope Gregory sent, A.D. 596, Augustin, with forty other monks, to make Christians of the Anglo-Saxons in South Britain. They might have had little success, were it not for the spouse of Ethelbert, who was one of the most considerable of the Saxon princes. She was a believer, and through her Augustin got access to the king. The queen incited in her husband a favourable opinion of the faith. Bertha was a votary of the Church of Rome. This was known unto the Roman clergy ; and they made use of her influence in the work undertaken in this island. Ethelbert had great sway over the chiefs or leaders, and used his power to good effect. Augustin, by his zeal, and the aid of Bertha the queen, converted the king, and the greatest part of the inhabitants of Kent. He laid the foundation of the Romish Church in England. He preached ; he used persuasion and threats ; and so great was his success, that he reared Christianity on paganism. The heathen temples were converted into churches, and the pagans, if not convinced and enlightened, were made submissive subjects of the pontiff,—a qualification thought more necessary, and esteemed higher in the Church than vital religion.

Gregory had invested Augustin with full power over all the British and Saxon clergy, as if they were within the pale of the Church. The monk assumed the title of Archbishop of Canterbury. He was determined to

rule Britain with the same sway that his superior exercised over the Church of Rome. Much might have been allowed to his merits in the religious revolution brought about in this kingdom. He was not wanting in natural parts. Nature endowed him with powers that made him adequate to the discharge of the functions of the high office he assumed. But he possessed others that were not in accordance with his profession of religion. He was haughty and arrogant, and would have every one submit to his rule. He, however, found it easier to convert pagans, than make the British Christians receive his dogmas. The Culdees strictly adhered to the written word, and were, though cruelly persecuted in England, exercising their functions in some parts of the kingdom. Though the Anglo-Saxons would have them entirely rooted out, they remained in the provinces for many years, spreading the light of the Gospel, wherever they were allowed. They made a strenuous opposition to the novel doctrines introduced by the monks. The pope having included all the provinces, as well as Wales and North Britain in the mission, not doubting but all the British isles would soon be brought within the pale of the Romish Church ; not expecting any great opposition from the few persecuted Christians.

The Culdees, or ancient British clergy, had their bible, in which they proved themselves to be more versant than the pope and the archbishop. They would receive nothing but what they read in the sacred writings. They adored none but the True God, the Holy Trinity. They were satisfied that the bible contained all that was binding on them. They soon became sensible how much the monks differed from the

primitive teachers of Christianity, and what sort of religion was taught by them. That instead of the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, now, they were imposing specious appearances on the credulous, in place of instilling the pure spiritual precepts into the mind of the people. Such appearances might have satisfied the converts from paganism, and might have contributed in no small degree to their conversion, although they had not produced any effect upon those who walked in the light of the Gospel. The Culdees resisted every attempt made upon them with firm resolution. In their disputes, they quoted divine authority, and frustrated all the cunning sophistry of their opponents, who desired to overrule them, to dictate and command, where they could not refute. More serious matters came under their consideration than the celebration of Easter, in which disputes, they quoted the writings of the apostle John.

Although the converted Saxons submitted to the rules of Augustin, they little regarded the doctrines and precepts of Christianity; they retained much of their old customs, superstition, and licentiousness. Their profession of the Christian religion was more nominal than real; the practice in which they delighted was pageantry. They remained ignorant of the purity of the doctrine of the Gospel, and were entire strangers to its morality. The Roman clergy made great concessions; and the indulgences they readily granted for liberal compensation, the new converts relished; though none of which would the British clergy tolerate. Then the numbers of converts increased, though comparatively few were added to the Church of Christ.

The pope could not have chosen a fitter person as

missionary than Augustin ; and from his great success in converting the pagans who conquered the Britons, and unrelentingly persecuted the Christians, as also his energetic attempts against the Culdees, he regarded North Britain also under his sway. Augustin was domineering, not only over those who submitted to the rules of his Church, but over all, even those who were not members or votaries of the Church of Rome. Addressing the president of the Church of Bangor in his usual imperative style, commanding him to submit to the head of the Church, the venerable Briton meekly replied, " We love all men, and what we do for you, we shall do for the pope, but he is not entitled to call himself the head of the Church." You may imagine the rage of Augustin at such a reply ; but of this we shall have occasion to say more afterward.

## CHAPTER XII.

Pope Celestine sends Palladius to convert the Irish.

It is time to turn to the west, and consider another of the British isles,—Iar-inn, the western island, pronounced, Erin. Ireland had been inhabited, by colonies from Gaul, posterior to Great Britain. We say colonies, for we find two tribes in Ireland at the earliest time of which we have any account. The Belgians, a warlike Celtic tribe, are the Firbolg of Ireland. But whether they were the first, or at what period of time they might have come hither, is unknown ; nor has it been ascertained whether they, or other Gauls, had first come hither. But it is probable the latter belonged to the sept that occupied South Britain, as it is certain that Culdees introduced Christianity into the island in the third century. They must have made some progress in propagating the new religion among the inhabitants, ere Pope Celestine sent Palladius to convert them.

We take no notice of the fabulous history of Ireland. The primitive inhabitants were, like other Celtic tribes, without letters, and time has shown that memory is not the surest store-house of past events. They likewise were deprived of their priests, and in consequence, were ready to receive the new religion : society subsists not without it, let it be true or false. The ill success of Palladius is proof that the Irish received the new religion, and that the elders taught them so clearly



from the word of truth, that they would not receive the Romish missionary, who would have disseminated among them extraneous doctrines. The Culdees, however, attempted not to instruct them in letters. Learning and arts had not been taught in Ireland, as in the Romish provinces. The instructors were content to use the faculty which the method of learning of the Druids had brought to the highest state of perfection. They might have found it expedient to comply with the prejudices of the nation ; it might also require a greater head than was found among them, to adopt a new method of instruction. Such a person appeared soon after Palladius. Whether Celestine was aware of the state of the inhabitants of Ireland when he sent the missionary to convert them, is uncertain. Palladius, if not so eloquent as Augustin, was zealous, yet his zeal and endeavours met little success. The Culdees would have opposed him, and would have exposed every thing advanced that they found not in the written word.

But Palladius had not a queen in Ireland of the Romish persuasion to open the way to him to chiefs or kings ; were it not for Bertha, Augustin and his forty brethren might have failed. There was this, too, against Palladius : the Christians in South Britain were persecuted by the Anglo-Saxons. The Irish, or as many of them as were instructed by the Culdees, were not afraid of being persecuted. Their priests declined, and they were left free to adopt any mode of worship.

The labours of Palladius could bear no fruit in proportion to his zeal. He left the island in despair, being made sensible that the people were better informed than he preconceived. He found teachers among them who were better acquainted with the Scriptures than he

himself. He then went to Scotland, in hopes of having better success ; but we have no evidence that he made that soil more productive of fruit. The Culdees being in North Britain sooner than in Ireland, their indefatigable labours produced greater results, and rendered the attempts of the Romish missionary unavailing. Eminent elders laboured successfully among the Caledonians. In the Roman provinces, in what is now called Scotland, they had the same advantages that the Christians in the south enjoyed.

The persecution of the Anglo-Saxons made many zealous teachers fly into North Britain, Ireland, and Wales, and these gave an impulse to the exertions of the native instructors. As the Druids taught not the people the use of letters, and the demolition of their colleges put a stop to the mode in which they instructed the youth, and made memory so ready and certain in retaining all useful knowledge, the Celtic tribes in Great Britain would have fallen into a very low degree of ignorance, were it not for the use of letters introduced among them by the Romans.

But the Irish as yet participated not in the advantage or disadvantage conferred on the Celts in Great Britain. They escaped the calamities brought on the South Britons by the nations they invited to aid them against invaders. They remained ignorant of the sciences and arts, and might have been content with their ancient liberty. As they were not made sensible of the benefits of those, they desired not to be instructed in them. In their green isle they feared no foreign foe ; their enemies were among themselves ; pirates might have visited their coasts, but they had arms to defend themselves. As to antiquity, the natives of the western

island could look to the first great nation that possessed the western world ; and the ages were fast approaching in which they were to flourish, by their piety and learning.

Although some missionaries were not so successful as others, the Church of Rome, like the great empire of the Romans, steadily continued her plan of making conquests. She disseminated her doctrines in equal proportion to the power she acquired. But as most conquerors rely more on power than equity, the pope and his clergy have always depended more on ingenuity than either reason or revelation. They meet with feeble resistance where the passions have been indulged, and the mind darkened. As in Samaria of old, idolatry and the worship of the True God have been strangely blended together. The more her territories were enlarged, the less scrupulous she became in receiving new tenets. But the Culdees who studied the Sacred Volume, and strictly adhered to it, strenuously opposed anything not authorised by the word of truth ; so that the attempts of Palladius failed in bringing the Irish and North Britons within the pale of the Church of Rome ; nay, they made the Caledonians more vigilant and wary. Their teachers possessed the word, and they prayed for the influence of the Holy Spirit. They looked less to the present than to the future, and might say with the Head of the Church, "that their kingdom was not of this world." The progress they were making produced great results : the glad tidings of great joy were received and appreciated ; the people were being enlightened, and could perceive the difference between the teaching of the British clergy and the Romish. But what was much against Pal-

ladius, and made him not so successful as Augustin, was, that he came not among idolators who attend more to pageantry than to the vitality of the religion they profess to believe. While indulged in their prejudices, and not strictly forbidden to forego their propensities, pagans will easily comply with the rites of a church that is not scrupulous in religious observances.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## The Bards oppose the New Religion.

The bards of the Celts were of the sacerdotal order. They obtained all the knowledge, and acquired all the instructions of the times; they were second to the Druids only: yet while these were denounced, slaughtered, their college in Anglesea demolished, and after they had lost the prestage they so long maintained over the public mind, the bards continued as popular as ever. No members of society were more useful in time of war, nor afforded so much pleasure to prince and people in time of peace. They incited a high spirit of prowess into the fighting men; and represented objects of the most earnest desire in glowing colours. All nations had their bards, and these claimed a power,—a faculty of which few could boast,—inspiration; but the Celtic bards were learned. All the Celtic tribes had their bards. Their character was sacred. The Welsh, the Irish, and the Gael, paid them the highest respect; and as it was in these countries the Culdees laboured, we might expect a strenuous opposition to the new doctrine, from the individuals who inculcated the religion which the Druids thought proper to divulge to the people.

The bards made only one distinction of all classes of men. The one included the brave, the other the weak. They raised the noblest qualities of the mind to the

highest degree of human capability. They made heroes of fighting men ; the feeble, or the little soul, as they described the weak, were not worthy of regard. The first would enter through difficulties and dangers into the noble isle ; the latter could never expect to arrive at the blessed place.

The island of heroes was well described by the bards, where there was perpetual youth, and the full enjoyment of all the pleasures that delighted men in this world. The weak and despised, were to suffer in another state of existence, and although the places of their suffering were not so well defined, the bards described them in a way that made a deep impression of a future state on the mind.

The qualities of mind, and powers of body, so well described and eulogized by the bards, have been opposed to the amiable dispositions and godly feelings, which the Author of the Christian religion made reputable by his precepts and examples : the meek and lowly Jesus brought life and immortality to light ; his kingdom was not of this world.

The new religion revealed a Being, though invisible to mortal eye, and exalted in glory above angels in the heavens, who yet regarded the weak and the poor of the earth, and looked into the heart, without respect of persons. The Culdees then taught doctrines and inculcated precepts, so opposite to all the Druids thought proper to reveal, and the bards so strenuously confirmed, that we need not wonder at the opposition made by the latter.

But while the bards were so popular, and their character so much esteemed, they moved in the highest ranks of society ; the low and humble were disregarded

by them. Not so by the Culdees. It was to save the souls of men the blessed Jesus came into the world : the Apostles laboured in the great harvest, which he left them to reap ; and the elders moved in their humble, useful walks. The progress made by them was great, as they laboured among a numerous class of the people that were contemned for imbecility, neglected as of little use to the state. And how gladly they would receive the gospel of grace, that offered salvation to all believers, when the meanest were not overlooked, but consoled and encouraged ! The spirit the bards would thus have inspired in the brave, was entirely opposed to Christianity ; it was making them dependent on magnanimity and human exertions. Their god or deity was sprung from the earth ; the gross material was exalted in his character as high as it was possible for fancy and imagination to conceive ; but the new religion manifested the divine attributes of love and mercy, of condescension, and compassion for the distressed.

When the bard and Culdee met, they disagreed, and opposed each other. Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, whom the poetry and tradition of the country make a son-in-law of a bard, would not yield in any respect ; and was contemptuously called "*Psalm Singer*," as he preferred these to their martial strains. Columba used another method with the bards, and reconciled them to his teaching. Patrick and Columba were themselves bards ; but they had chosen themes different from the popular ones. As the bards never introduced the mysteries into their song, it is supposed that they excluded all religion from their poetry. This is a mistake. It has been alleged that the ancient

bards introduced not religion into their poetry, and it was so in regard to the new religion, but they made ample use of what the Celtic priests, the Druids, allowed to be divulged to the people. It was the machinery in the larger poems. They introduced no gods, like other pagans, to take part in the engagements; they depended alone on the might of man. They made heroes of men, and demigods of heroes. The shades or spirits of the dead, appeared on great particular occasions. And the people believed they were acting in sight of the mighty men who had departed this life; but who still kept a watchful eye over their lives and their affairs. The Celtic bards had the present and the future before them; and they made use of animate and inanimate nature as subjects, as they found suitable in their compositions. In many respects their theology widely differed from that of the Culdees, so that their opposition to the new religion is easily accounted for.

We find the Christian religion only mentioned in the popular poetry of the country in modern composition.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## The Apostle of the Irish a Culdee.

The next missionary that went to Ireland after Palladius, was not sent by the pope. He was a Scotchman, a Caledonian, and a Culdee. Various accounts have been given of the life of this celebrated person. Ecclesiastical writers have not agreed even about his name. It is unnecessary to take notice of all that has been said of him, and needless to waste time in confuting what is improbable; though a writer of the present day must have thought otherwise, when he dealt so much in monkish legends.\* He tells us of a boy that was born on the banks of the Clyde, 372 A.D., named Succot. That he committed some fault that probably made his parents leave Scotland. They settled in Armorica; Irish pirates carried him and his two sisters off, and sold them in Ireland to the chieftain of some pagan clan. Succot was sent to the field to keep swine. He was not converted till he was sixteen years of age. Twice a captive, and twice rescued, he fancied he heard voices calling him in the night, "Come, holy child, and walk once more among us." This was Succot, afterwards called St Patrick. The idle stories of the monks savour much of the miraculous of this person, whose life ought to be well known, as his labours produced so much good fruit in the island, where the Romish missionary produced none. His name in his

\* Dr D'Aubigne, vol. 1, 1853.

own language was Padruig, (Patrick,) a name that is common in the country he left. He was born in the neighbourhood of Dumbarton, on the banks of the Clyde ; his parents were of rank, and he received a liberal education, which, with his high natural endowments, made him conspicuous in early life. He was pious from his youth, and preferred the psalms to the poetry in which consisted the literature of the Britons ; hence he was called Patrick the *Psalm Singer*. It is proper to advert to the state of the two countries at this time.

When the Romans divided all they conquered of Great Britain into provinces, towns began to rise in them, and learning was introduced with the arts. The Christian religion was making rapid progress. Vespasiana was the name imposed on the province beyond the Forth, over which the Romans had only a temporary dominion. The inhabitants were named by the conquerors, Caledonians, and their religious instructors were the Culdees, of whom many were highly distinguished by their learning as well as piety ; none more so than Patrick. There was frequent intercourse between the two nations of Ireland and North Britain. They were Celts, and both received the new religion ; but the Irish as yet had not received the knowledge of letters. Patrick was not unacquainted with their illiterate state, and thinking he might do more good among them than in his native land, in which he had many rivals, and where there was less need of him, conceived the idea of adopting the Western Isle, at an age when experience taught him the measures necessary to be adopted. In addition to his natural parts and learning, he was eloquent, and of a commanding aspect,

which no doubt made him contend with the bards, who seldom met their equals in *copia verborum*, and the abundance of facts that were stored in their memories. Few could wield like them the language of poetry and oratory. As descended from the same great nation, speaking dialects of the same language, not so distant as not to be well understood, and connected by the same customs and laws, it was not exiling himself into a far country, or to sojourn among a strange people, that the Caledonian crossed the sea ; but he must have a stronger motive than all these ; his ardent desire must have been to impart the knowledge of letters, as well as establish the Church on a firmer foundation. He was influenced by the Spirit, and by divine grace would endeavour to be of as great service as possible. Patrick might not have been ignorant of Palladius' want of success in Ireland, and the cause the Culdees always showed their zeal in propagating the gospel of grace, as they were fully convinced of the truth. He burned with the same zeal ; the great field in which labourers were wanted, lay before him. The Irish lost their priests, teachers, and legislators ; the Culdees were not wanting in supplying their place, but hitherto they wanted, what, by the blessing of God, human ingenuity and enlightened exertion could have done. Patrick was the person that was qualified by nature and grace with his acquired accomplishments, to fill the important situation. Patrick went to Ireland in the year of our Lord 432. The time of his birth is not so certain, and that of his death has been also disputed. In the calendar, Patrick died 464 ; but as writers of credit aver that he lived in Ireland 40 years, he must have departed this life in 472. His birth must have been in the beginning of the century. We learn from tradition that

he was married, and past thirty years before he left his native land. He commenced his labours by teaching the Irish the use of letters. The undertaking was arduous, but he was equal to it. He was an indefatigable teacher, as well as a powerful preacher. Such a man was wanted among a rude and uncultivated people.

It was the first thing necessary, and the surest way of enlightening a nation, to introduce learning and teach the use of letters. Patrick laid a sure foundation, on which he reared a great superstructure. It is alleged of him that he burnt all the ancient writings that fell into his hands. These must have been the private lucubrations of the Druids ; and he, perceiving the dangerous tendency of them were they to become known to a people who were being able to peruse them, and who were but so recently converted, judged it proper to destroy them.

The use of letters being unlawful among the Celts, whatever the Druids committed to writing was not to be divulged. Their mysteries were to die with themselves ; but the Culdees made no secret of any part of the new religion, and that it might be kept pure and unadulterated, all superstition was to be effaced from the mind. The pure doctrine of the Gospel was to raise them in a high degree in the scale of being ; the great boon conferred on the Irish by Patrick, was soon appreciated, and they henceforth became a learned nation. All ranks were to receive instruction, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, not by long continuance under austere instructors, and severe discipline ; learning was made easy, and study pleasant exercise.

At this period of time commenced the genuine

history of the nation, and the civilization of the people. To this native of Scotland, the Irish owed more than to all their princes and chiefs. The Culdees, the elders who introduced Christianity were zealous and laborious. But it was Patrick, by divine grace and the influence of the Holy Spirit, that conceived and executed the great work ; making of barbarians a nation of saints.

But however great were the powers and endowments of this distinguished person, all the works attributed to him were more than human abilities could have executed during the period of forty years, and none of the Culdees made the least pretension to the power of working miracles. The fact is, that he carried from his native country the form of Church government, which was readily received in Ireland, wherein the first Culdees that came into the island made some progress ; he only commenced on a larger scale, and completed the undertaking. That Patrick was learned, there is no doubt. He left evidences sufficient to show it. Two epistles written by him are extant, which have been published by Ware. That he was pious and zealous in the good cause, is certain. He was not only indefatigable, but most desirous of communicating knowledge ; and he adopted the best method of giving instruction, and spreading the light of truth through the land. Yet he was assisted in various ways. The Celts have been always lovers of knowledge, and they then made rapid progress in learning. They who carried the gospel along with them, wherever they went, were apt pupils. This mode was not attempted by the missionary from Rome ; perhaps not thought of. No sooner was instruction imparted indiscriminately, than learning became common, and individuals distinguished them-

selves. Then were all ready to receive the truth revealed by the Word of God. The people were the great harvest ready to be reaped.

Patrick entertained extensive views, and possessed powerful energy, in applying the rule and discipline of the Church of his country. He possessed also the faculty of addressing and persuading multitudes, in a high degree, as well as commanding authority; and he needed all, in planting the institutions of North Britain in new soil. The ancient Church government was plain and simple. In each society or congregation there were elders, (the *majores natu*,) who claimed no higher title. As they followed the example of the Apostles, they choose the number twelve, and Patrick had done the same in the country of his adoption. It was then no very difficult task to form congregations of such as had adopted the Christian religion, and to these Patrick daily added converts by his dexterity in attacking druidism, and exposing errors and superstitions. He was not slow in making use of all the advantages put in his power.

The Christianity which Patrick communicated to the Irish, was in form and doctrine according to the Word of God, being the Church government established in Caledonia, as appears from the statements of Archbishop Usher. "We read," says the candid and learned prelate, in Nennius, "that at the beginning, St Patrick founded 365 churches, and ordained 365 bishops. He ordained for each church one bishop or pastor," elders, a the Culdees would have said, "and about eight elders to each pastor." These were the numbers appointed in his native country; and that ultimately became the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; a parish minister,

with his session of elders, in every church and parish that received the gospel. The materials were ready ; yet it required more than ordinary abilities to make use of them.

This is a true statement of the labours of the apostle of the Irish, which were great, but to which his learning, abilities, and industry, had been adequate. The grace of God abounded in him. It derogates not from the fame of this justly celebrated person, that he adopted the plan laid down by others ; and applied the advances made in former ages, to a people and country thus enlightened and sanctified. Were we to have attributed all to himself, we must have believed with the credulous, that St Patrick was endowed with the power of working miracles, and have adopted the monkish legends, that would have the age of miracles to have been continued to the time of which we are writing. But although the Culdees would have shuddered at the idea of imposing on the credulity of the people, as has been done by impostors, they implored the aid of the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged the efficacy of Divine grace, without which Patrick could never have performed the works which spoke his fame after his demise. But he was the only person of his time that made use of the means, and turned them to so good account ; and he not only contrived but likewise moved and guided those operations during a long period of human life. By his sagacity in contriving, and activity in executing, he accomplished more than all of his age besides, by their united talents. To transfer the modes and habits of one country to another simultaneously, is no easy task ; it requires insight into character, and prudence in conducting affairs, and time also. Patrick was not wanting

in either, and with these he possessed resolution and boldness, that made him firm and determined.

The Apostle of the Irish not only accomplished the work undertaken by him, of making a nation learned and pious, but also inspired others with the same spirit of enterprise, zeal, and perseverance. After-ages and other countries benefited by the literature and theology that rendered Ireland so famous, as to have attracted the youth of the nobility hither to be educated. Many of the scholars or disciples of Patrick were also eminent by their piety and learning, whose fame was spread abroad. It were good for others to have imitated them in their humility and usefulness; whatever the natural abilities and acquired learning of Patrick, might not others be found his equal in any country that received the same opportunities? True; but it so happens, that individuals arise in countries and ages, that far surpass their contemporaries, who might have had the same opportunities. He received the blessing from above, like the dew that falls on the tender grass to make it produce abundant fruit; it was not the pretended revelations of idle monks, nor the vain reveries of priests of the dark ages. The apostle of the Irish not only performed the great work of which he was, by the grace of God, instrumental, but they were continued in after ages. A great man lives in his works after the body moulders in the dust. The successors of Patrick were learned, zealous, and pious. They walked in his footsteps; they imitated him; but their sole dependence was on a greater; they were the reapers in the harvest of their Lord; yet no one rose during some ages to equal Patrick, which is a clear demonstration of how far he excelled others. It is thus, we see, in many



countries where men are distinguished by high talents, learning, and piety, that it is distant and far between that an individual rises above them, whether a poet, or philosopher, or divine, whose daring genius soars higher. Had Patrick remained all his days in the country of his birth, he might have been useful in his day, and highly respected, like others that were zealous, and faithful, but, not having the opportunity or the occasion that would render him more conspicuous, his memory would have died. In his zeal to cultivate a rich, but long neglected soil, in which he laboured with diligence and success, he put forth all his strength; and by the grace of God, the result was great.

Patrick died A.D. 472, being, as far as can be ascertained, seventy-two years of age; and this settles the year of his birth; he being forty years in Ireland, he must have been thirty-two when he left Scotland. At such a mature age, his experience and knowledge well fitted him to undertake the great work he premeditated. The adequate endowments were the gifts of Divine Providence, which were applied by the Spirit. His memory was cherished by his followers, who were desirous of imitating him in the examples he exhibited by his learning, talents, and piety, and they perpetuated his fame with endeavours and exertions of walking in his path. Patrick, who, as we have already observed, was a Culdee, had no connexion whatever with the Church of Rome, nor was he allied to any order of monks. He was a presbyter or elder, and desired no higher title. After him, in Ireland flourished learning and religion in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, and during that period it was truly denominated the "Isle of Saints," and reputed the land of arts and sciences.

The Saxons sent many of their princes and princesses to Ireland, to receive a pious and liberal education ; and eminent teachers of Britain were educated there. As a nation, the western isle was justly celebrated during the foresaid three centuries, and many individuals were highly distinguished by the sanctity of their lives, and by their acquirements. Where many in an age and country are equal, though in a high degree, they pass through life without particular notice. Nor are we to relate all that might have been said of individual Culdees, as a brief history of them is all that is intended. It would be tedious, as well as unnecessary, to take notice of every thing and person that might have been famous. But one that was more conspicuous than the rest in the same school, cannot be passed over in silence. He appeared in a little more than a century after Patrick ; who in his turn left Ireland, and coming to Scotland, became the Apostle of the Picts,—a Gothic race, of whom a brief account will be given in the appendix ; we mean, Columba, whose life was written by a member of the institution of Iona, and others, who had an opportunity of ascertaining all particulars regarding him. The following chapter will be given to his life and labours ; in which will be inserted only what can be ascertained to be true, excluding everything that savours of the miraculous. The Culdees pretended not to possess any preternatural powers. They were influenced, enlightened, and aided by the Holy Spirit. While all acknowledged the piety and learning of this holy man, he himself confessed his imperfection as man, but his firm resolution in walking before God in dependence on divine grace.

## CHAPTER XV.

Columba, the Apostle of the Picts, a Culdee.

While the missionaries of the Church of Rome, the clergy of the regulars, were extending and enlarging her powers in Britain, and darkness was overshadowing Christendom ; as the pure doctrines of the gospel were being corrupted by tradition, and new doctrines, which like exotic plants, were received into the Church that was denominated infallible ; an individual rose in the west, who, by the grace of God, shed a light on regions remote, and inhabited by pagans. This was Columba, a native of Ireland, who was born A.D. 521. He was the most eminent of the followers of the father of literature and founder of so many churches in Ireland. The father of Columba was Felim, son of Neill the Great, King of Ireland. Patrick and Columba changed countries in their turn. This individual came to a people who were idolaters, or followed the practices of their race without much regard to any religion. We have already explained why the Culdees in Caledonia made no progress among them, notwithstanding their wonted zeal to spread the light of the Word. What hope, then, could Columba entertain of succeeding in his missions ? Any but Columba might have despaired, and relinquished the enterprise. We shall hear how he succeeded. We have different biographies of Columba ; his life and labours are well known. We are thankful

that so much has been recorded of so great and good a man, although we do not subscribe to every thing told of him.

Columba excelled all his cotemporaries in learning and piety ; he was dedicated to the holy office from his infancy. He received all the advantages of education, and the grace of God abounded in him, as had been apparent in all his behaviour. He received instruction from the most eminent teachers in his native land, all famed for their learning and piety. He was more especially under the pious Ciaran, (Kiaran,) who afterwards came to Cantire, and preached the Gospel at Campbeltown,—called Gille-Ciaran, in honour of the holy man. Colum, or Columba, founded churches in Ireland before he was twenty-eight years of age ; after that period of life he went abroad, where he distinguished himself by his learning and piety. He was offered promotion and high honours, which he declined, saying, that he wished to be useful in his day, which he preferred to riches and power ; that he relinquished his rights at home, to which he was entitled ; and that he could not think of accepting what belonged to others in a foreign land.

When he returned to Ireland, he found the Church in a prosperous state, and many learned and godly men preaching the light of knowledge through all the kingdom. This was, as might be expected, from the successors of Patrick, who founded so many churches and seats of learning, over which presided his most distinguished disciples. Little more was to be done by a young man of an aspiring mind. Columba considered whether he might not be more useful in the sister kingdom, over part of which still hung the darkness of

superstition and idolatry. He threw his eye on the western isles, where the ground was not yet broken, and a part of the mainland in possession of the islanders. Taking with him twelve brethren in Christ, learned, and proved by their piety and diligence, he entered a boat made of wicker and covered with hides, which were the common transports of the time, and called *currochs*. In the *curroch* was a light keel, and the necessary timbers. Some of these boats were large, and carried many; armies were transported in them between Gaul and Briton, and more distant countries. We can form no idea of them from the small ones we have seen, that were only used in crossing rivers and narrow straits. The one in which Columba and his friends crossed from Ireland to the Western Isles, was no inconsiderable vessel, if not of the largest size. Part of the passage, especially the Mull of Cantire, is, in boisterous weather, very dangerous. Columba steered towards the west coast of Scotland, and landed, A.D. 563, in I, (Iona,) a small island, separated from Mull by a channel three-quarters of a mile broad. The place where he landed is still called *Port-na-Curraich*,—the harbour of the wicker-boat. It is shown to visitors as one of the reminiscences of the holy man. What made him land here, whether it was chance, or choice, we pretend not to say. He might have regarded it as a central station between the mainland and the western islands,—being the kingdom of the Picts. But one thing respecting the little island is singular, that it has been in succession the chief residence of three orders of clergy. The Druids possessed it before Columba, and they endeavoured to prevent his settling on it. Columba sought and obtained it in possession from the Picts; it

was again in possession of the Romish Clergy. As Colum, *Irish*, Calum, *Gaelic*, was changed *euphoniæ causa* into Columba, so was *I*, (island,) and *thonn*, (waves,) into Iona. But more of this island afterwards.

It was soon made known to Columba that the Druids had resided in Iona. Some of them having returned to it, were desirous that he should remove from it. They also attempted to impose on him, but he soon discovered who they were, and would hold no communion with them.

We have already explained how the Picts continued in their superstition, in a kingdom where the Culdees were zealous and successful in spreading the light of the Gospel among the people. The cause was not unknown to Columba, and he had foresight sufficient to make him repair to the king of the Picts, convinced, that, if he could gain him, he would more easily prevail upon his subjects to receive the truth. There was not a queen to whom he could apply for aid, as Bertha in England, who assisted Augustin ; but there was a greater, though unknown to the heathen king, and the holy man trusted in Him.

There was this difference between him and the Culdees of Scotland. The Irish and the Picts were not at war. The latter might have heard of the former ; and from their high fame, conceived a favourable opinion of them. Be this as it may, Columba was not to be daunted, nor delayed in his labour of love. He repaired at once to the seat of government. Attempts were made to prevent his being introduced to the king. He, well knowing how necessary it was to gain access to him for his future success, would not be denied, although the king at first refused to see him.

Columba was a man of great courage, he possessed strength of both body and mind, and often had need of it. His life was not seldom in danger, and necessity made him use the means in his power for self-preservation ; but he was prudent and patient, and not passionate or rash. He frequently encountered difficulties that would have discouraged others, and these were of various kinds. The country was difficult of access, covered with wood, inundated with stagnant waters and morasses ; it was possessed by a fierce and warlike people, whose manners and language were strange to him. When Columba appeared at the court of the king, at the end of Lochness, and was admitted to his royal presence, he was obliged to use an interpreter to explain the communication that took place. The repulse he met would have damped the courage of any but Columba ; common hospitality was denied to those who accompanied him ; he, however, persevered in his request, and obtained his desire. It was then the interpreter was mostly needed ; it was through him that he at first communicated instruction to the people, till he acquired as much knowledge of their language as to have made himself to be understood. This is evident proof that the Picts were not Celts. When Patrick went to Ireland, he needed not an interpreter ; the Gael and the Irish spoke the Celtic or British language, and perfectly understood each other, as they do even at the present time,—they converse together ; of all the dialects of this living language, there is less difference between them. The name of the king to whom Columba applied was Bruti,—Latin, *Brudius*.

The Druids, as might be expected, gave him all the opposition they could. They soon perceived that it was

to supplant themselves he came. They would, if possible, have baffled him in all his endeavours, and prevented him making converts. They could not shut their eyes on the progress of the new religion in Caledonia, and were alarmed it would so spread through Pictland. There were likewise other obstructions to the progress of the missionaries, that were more dangerous than wood, pools, and marshes. The waste land was full of wild animals, few places were free of them, they infested the habitations of the people; and when men went by sea, the coasts and ferries were not safe in all weather. But the zeal and perseverance of Columba surmounted all difficulties. He came fully resolved to brave all dangers; not that he was foolhardy and resolute, for he always walked in the fear of the Lord. He endured the greatest hardships with incredible patience. It was not from the brute creation, and the intricacies of journeying in a country not opened by roads, or the tides that are so rapid, and the storms so frequent, that the obstructions so often occurred to prevent his labours. His austere manner, his abstinence and prayers, were matter of ridicule and contempt to the pagans. But in the course of his ministry, he turned these to feelings of respect and serious attention; and in the course of better acquaintance, he was regarded with esteem.

Hardy, and enured to toil as the Picts were, few could equal, none surpass Columba in suffering, cold, fatigue, and privations of every kind. This was not overlooked by the hardy race, that prized themselves on such endurance. In his old age, Columba could lie down on the ground, having a stone for a pillow beneath his head. His constitution was well adapted to the



exigencies of the times, and the inclemencies of the skies, in a country uncultivated, still lying in the rude state of nature. But he never complained, while the work of the Lord prospered in his hands. He laboured during the space of thirty-four years, planting churches, and spreading the light of the gospel through the kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland.

By the labours of Columba and his associates, the whole kingdom of the Picts was changed. The fierce barbarians became humble, and they believed in a higher power than their former gods, and took pleasure in hearing the holy man explaining the Word of God. Druidism was not unknown in these remote parts of Great Britain; Celtic priests, who went beyond the reach of Roman power, still existed. Though their religion, and the superstition of the Picts, might have been on the same principles, they made no converts among the latter; theirs was exclusive,—neither of them was like polytheism. But the superstition of the Picts, whatever their rites and ceremonies were, died as they embraced Christianity, whereas much of druidism remained long after the Druids became extinct; the cause of this was that their language was Celtic, or British, in which were interwoven their religious practices.

The more Columba was known among the Picts, the more the holy man was venerated. His fame was spread abroad; he was universally admired for his great parts, that gained him esteem wherever he went. Multitudes gathered about him, and followed him, listening to his instruction, and imploring his blessing. So highly was he revered, that even his place of residence was deemed sacred. The last request of kings and chieftains, in after ages, was, that their remains should be interred in Iona.

Columba's success was equal to his labours, and the trust put in him was owing to his integrity. He superintended the churches which he founded in the two kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland; these were three hundred, besides a hundred houses of instruction. That all these were established by the individual exertions of one man, we are not to suppose. Ireland, and a great part of Scotland, were, as we have already related, christianized, and formed into congregations, and schools were established, before his time; but he had improved the systems, and put a stamp of a higher authority on them. Yes, on all, those that he founded, and those that were previously established, so that all came under his name. What, then, were the offers made to him abroad, and the possessions he might have inherited in his own country, to the conquest he made in the kingdom of superstition and idolatry! How unlike the conquerors that have laid waste countries, and left desolation and misery in the paths in which they have trodden! There is no comparison. How much good he has done in his life, and how great the fruits of his labours after he departed! In their spiritual state, all in the two kingdoms he saw worshipping the living God, ere he left this world. The remnant of darkness and superstition for a time was, like the lingering shadows of night, fast disappearing.

Columba met with more opposition than has been observed above. The bards—an influential class—raised their voice against him, but he, in his own peculiar way of managing the minds of men, silenced them, and made them friends instead of foes, so that they composed eulogistic strains in praise of him. He himself composed poetry in Latin, and in his native

language. Columba studied much ; he often passed whole nights poring over volumes ; but he gave the most of his time to the Scriptures, and to meditation and prayer. He taught his disciples, and confirmed them by the doctrine drawn from the pure fountain. The light of the Gospel shone bright on all the scenes of his labours, while the darkness of ignorance encompassed the papal dominions.

History delineates the character of Columba as most courageous, and full of holy zeal. He was tried, and found perfect ; his courage and high spirit being frequently put to the test. Though aware of all the dangers in his way, when he entered on his great labours, instead of shrinking, he always rose above his natural powers, determined to proceed in the just cause ; he never lagged behind, nor fagged in his work. He viewed the prospect before him, and well knew what he had to perform. He prayed that his life might be spared till he accomplished what he undertook in the name of God ; and, depending on divine aid, he persevered in his undertaking, and had the great satisfaction of seeing the object of his desire,—a heathen nation converted.

While Columba was so much distinguished by his sagacity and prudence in all his behaviour, firm and resolute, yet full of simplicity and tenderness. he was always for peace ; still his love of a tranquil life never prevented him from exercising the strictest discipline. Such was his impartiality and upright conduct, that chieftains came from Ireland, and various parts of Scotland, to refer their disputes to him. Though he had no desire of being judge or arbiter in secular matters, his love of peace and justice made him take

the trouble of settling matters, that they themselves could not. But his time was better employed, as it was more agreeable to his feelings, in presiding over seats of learning, and directing the affairs of the Church. Every hour of his well-spent life was taken up with holy vocations, and were entirely occupied. His labours were manifold. He instructed the youth that were sent to Iona from all places ; he selected the fittest persons that could be found for the ministry, and new ones were always required to fill vacancies. He possessed a penetrating judgment, which was greatly increased by experience and observation ; he never erred in appointing proper persons as pastors and elders. His mode of selection was simple and successful ; the chosen were persons of piety and energy, and required to be learned and given to letters. Had he entertained any doubt of candidates, he sent them back to their studies ; the progress made by them in a given time was seen, and no bad criterion of merit. There was a trial of ability and integrity ; talents, and a desire for the office, were indispensable, and, more than all, godliness. The Culdee elders, whether preachers or instructors, laboured with their hands, and were burdensome to none. They were strangers to all extravagance and luxury ; they were content with the necessaries of life ; they were above want, as they could provide by their industry their daily bread.

Columba's hospitality often exceeded the means he possessed, yet he cheerfully dispensed what he had, and the little, with the blessing of kind Providence, served the purpose. Any person was welcome to come to him, and remain with him as long as they pleased. He had something suitable to the taste of every one. His con-

versation was always on things of life eternal, yet he was not unmindful of what was necessary to be done in this world. His chief desire was to lead the thoughts of all men to the most important studies. While he practiced charity, he recommended liberality of sentiment. If injured, he returned good for evil ; he was never the aggressor. His modesty and humble opinion of himself prevented his coming forward in a prominent position, as his great merit should have placed him ; yet the high and low looked up to him, and he commanded their respect and esteem. The truly great is generally the most humble.

In person Columba was majestic ; his manners were pleasant, he was courteous and cheerful. Though austere, abstinent, and laborious, he was comely, and of a florid countenance. He was not a sloven, nor careless in his dress or outward appearance. He might be, as he really appeared in public, on equality with kings and chieftains, and was almost adored by the people. He spoke with authority, and made indelible impression on his hearers ; his delivery was solemn and serious, and the application of his doctrines always suitable. He could raise his voice to the highest key. Adamnan says, in his life of him, " that he could be heard at a mile's distance when singing psalms." In addressing a great congregation, frequently in the open air, his power of eloquence was most necessary ; they who are accustomed to speak in this manner know how much power is required.

It was by his holiness of life that Columba was chiefly distinguished ; he was holy in all his behaviour,

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\* Bede,—Dr John Smith, &c.

in his conversation, in his walks ; he was always mindful of the omnipresence of the Almighty. It was he that might be said to have walked with God in the world.

“ Art thou resolved,” said Coivi, the Arch-Druid, to him, “ to sail to-morrow ;” as he intended to go to some distant place, being the third day of the week, and unluckily, as the Druids taught, and the vulgar believed. Columba replied, that he was, if it pleased God to spare his life. “ You cannot,” added the Arch-Druid ; “ I will raise a storm, and cause contrary winds ; I’ll cover all round with darkness.” The holy man answered, “ The Omnipotent commands all ; in his name I always undertake whatever I intend to do ; guided by his providence, I shall go, and not fear.”

The Druids pretended to possess influence over the elements of air and water ; the people are too ready to believe the preternatural. Columba knew it was too much so in his time, and he wished to demonstrate the folly of giving credit to whatever was unlikely and improbable ; and knowing how much more effectual is example than precept in convincing the ignorant, took every opportunity of instructing them in the way most conducive to enlighten them. He penetrated into the delusive ways of impostors, and showed the folly of attempting to pry into things beyond their capacity or knowledge. His chief wish and principal aim was to persuade all men to believe in the truths of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation.

While Columba walked in the fear of the Lord, he knew that he was safe from the evil attempts of enemies. He went on his way rejoicing, when he saw men forsaking their superstitious observances, and at-

tending to the word of truth. His time was not spent in cloisters, nor in secret places, studying things that were not of the smallest use to the people, that imagined they were mysteries too sacred to be revealed to the vulgar. He was active in business, yet commenced no work till he first approached the throne of grace. So fervent in his devotion, and regular in his habits, that whether he was on a journey, whether in the light of day or at night, among friends or strangers, he always adored his God ; in a house, or under the canopy of heaven, where he had no shelter to cover his head from the storm, he never neglected his duty to his Maker. He prayed in his room in private, in the church, in the field ; at midnight, when others enjoyed their rest, his voice was frequently heard, as he poured out his spirit to the Father of Spirits. There is a place in Iona where this holy man was wont, in a more particular manner, to commune with his Maker and Saviour ; the place is still known, and called the Hill of Angels,—a name given it by the people, who entertained the idea that he was there surrounded by those blessed beings.

Columba never commenced any work until he prayed to God to prosper his undertaking. He implored the blessing of God on everything that was useful to man. When he saw the fields of corn ripening, he thanked his Maker for his kind providence. He never entered a house, but he implored blessing upon it ; and before he partook of a friend's repast, he worshipped God, that all should partake of a spiritual feast. While Columba never lost sight of the scriptural doctrine, he was anxious to address his discourse to the capacity of his audience. He was all things to all men, that he might instruct and enlighten them. He never made use of a

dubious or fallacious expression. Kings paid more regard to his words than to the actions of others; he never flattered, nor gave an evasive answer. Rough, King of Ireland, asked him, "if he thought he would be saved?" "Hardly," says he, "unless you mend, and change your ways, and forsake your sins."

Columba's admonitions were spiritual, and he enforced his precepts by example. His good works were the fruits of his faith. He was a man of God, a firm believer in the truths revealed, and a faithful friend of all that feared the Lord. Aidan, a Scottish king, asked him, "if his heart was unprone to evil, that he himself could find no fault in his conduct?" He answered, "that he was imperfect like other men, and was subject to failings, but that he would not commit a crime for his kingdom, nor even for the whole world."

Columba was humane and merciful, he was kind to all creatures, as they were the work of the Author of life, who distinguished the inferior animals by instinct, as well as the superior by reason. But nothing gave him more uneasiness than the thoughtless state of sinners, nor so much pain as the death of an impenitent. He was content with whatever Providence afforded, and rejoiced when any sought consolation with a contrite spirit; it was the greatest pleasure to him to comfort the penitent. Very great regard was paid to what he said in all matters, secular and religious, as he was known to be a man of reflection, discernment, and judgement, who had no sinister motive to serve, but did all to the glory of God. There are many instances recorded, that show his tender care of all God's works, his wise sayings, as well as good deeds, which would require more room than can be given in a brief account



like this ; but what relates to the close of his life, is too interesting to be overlooked. Sometime before his death, he warned his friends of his approaching end. He went one summer day to the far off end of the island, where his brethren were at work ; he informed them that he was approaching near the goal to which all mortals are hastening. Seeing their unfeigned sorrow, he comforted them. He desired them to come near him ; he implored blessing on them. All the small island lay in view, which was theirs in possession, and he told his friends "they would prosper in it as long as they feared God."

Another day, he went with his servant Dermid to the barn, where he observed a garner full of corn, and he blessed God for his bounties. On a sabbath thereafter, he says to Dermid, "This is a day of rest to me, and the last in this world, that will end my years of pilgrimage ; I go at night on the journey of my fathers. Thou, O God, condescendest to reveal this to me, my earnest desire is to be with Thee." Dermid wept. He in a little time, entered and read the psalm-book. He went in the evening into the house of prayer, and after his devotions, returned to his own. Laying on his bed, he earnestly desired Dermid to remember his last words, and relate them to his brethren ; then he gave him many advices that he was to communicate, and blessed them all. When the holy man heard the warning to go to prayer, he rose, and was the first that entered. When fallen on their knees, he raised his head,—the brethren were around him,—he attempted to implore blessing on them, and breathed his last without a struggle, in the year of our Lord 597, and the seventy-seventh year of his age.

It is at his death that a man's character is best known. The living are more sensible of the worth of the good when he is taken from them, and may have cause to regret how little they might have benefited while they had the opportunity of learning from him how they should walk before God. But Columba was valued in his lifetime ; the greatest attention was paid to his doctrine and instructions, and all his disciples followed his example, and carefully laid up his precepts ; nay, his followers, and all who heard him, esteemed him, as he deserved. He was held in the highest respect at the national council of Drumceat, in Ireland, where he appeared as representative of the clergy of North Britain.

Like the apostle of the Irish, Columba was not only learned, but had the talents, as well as desire, of imparting all he knew to others. He made Iona a great seminary of learning, from which teachers were sent to other kingdoms. The youth of highest rank came to the celebrated seminary of the West, where the classics were taught, and the Scriptures read and expounded. Columba's library was not filled with fables and legends of monks of the dark ages, but with the valuable works of the ancients. He composed, as has been observed, in verse and prose, in at least two languages ; his biographers have preserved some of his poems. Although most of his productions, along with the famous library, have been destroyed, we may form an estimate of his literary labours from the specimens we have of the works of his successors. It appears how much they studied the languages from the excellent Latin of Cumin and Adamnan ; the last left proofs of his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and had also written a geography of the Holy Land.

All their learning they chiefly owed to Columba. He gave much of his time to the study of dark and difficult passages, and so enlightened his disciples that they had much clearer and better knowledge of the Scriptures than most contemporaries, and they taught the people in such purity and simplicity as was little known in the schools of the Romish clergy.

Columba composed the rules of Iona that were observed by his followers and disciples in all the churches over which he presided. He made those transcribe them with the greatest accuracy ; but his chief labour was to communicate knowledge, to instruct the people, and to train up the young that indicated ability to the ministry. They formed societies and seminaries, from whence were sent members to the churches of North Britain, and missionaries to the south of the island, and to various parts abroad. They all, while labouring in those departments of literature and theology, maintained themselves after the example of their late president. Columba never sought more than was necessary for his subsistence, and all the brethren, like him, were frugal and industrious.

It has been matter of surprise how the library of Iona was collected, in which were so many valuable books, in such an age and in so remote a country. Such a question naturally occurs, and should be resolved. It has been already mentioned that Columba was abroad in his younger days, where he selected many valuable works, then fallen into disuse, neglected and of little value. Columba wanted not means any more than taste, and he made such selections as added greatly to his library at home. Books were not scarce in Ireland since the days of Patrick, who was a no less lover of

learning, and who incited a desire in the breasts of others for knowledge that subsided not for ages. Literature was cultivated, sacred and profane studies prosecuted ; but besides all that, Fergus II. assisted Alaric the Goth at the sacking of Rome, and carried away a share of the plunder, among which was a chest full of books, which he gave to the Presbytery of Iona. It has been supposed that the lost books of Livy had been among them, but owing to the tenderness of the parchment, they could not be perused.

Columba was not in the least tainted by the errors of the Church of Rome. The venerable Bede, with all his zeal for that Church, allows the divines of Iona to have possessed the highest knowledge of divinity, and acknowledges how much the churches throughout Britain were indebted to the Culdees\* for their preaching the gospel so zealously, and accompanying it with the purity and simplicity of the first ages of Christianity ; at the same time he laments how long they wanted the only thing which, in his opinion, they needed, in order to be perfect, namely, the rites of the Church, especially the right knowledge of the pasch and tonsure.

We have already mentioned the number of churches which Columba founded in Ireland and Scotland, and the seats of learning in the latter. We may add here, that no fewer than one hundred and fifteen eminent disciples had been trained to the ministry during his time.

Columba, by his piety and integrity, his assiduous labours and great learning, obtained his desire in leaving the country of his adoption in such a state as, by the blessing of God, rendered it religious in future ages.

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\* Bede, Boethius.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## Columba's Successors.

The apostle of the Picts left the seat of learning in the west of Scotland in a flourishing state. Iona was universally acknowledged as the first seminary of learning in Christendom. Columba and his brethren laboured the barren soil, and the grace of God, like the dew fallen on arid ground, made it prolific. The darkness of superstition disappeared before the light of truth ;—the whole Pictish nations were made Christians, and druidism was become a dead letter.

The Culdees of Iona superintended the churches and seats of learning founded in Caledonia, or rather in Scotland, as all the inhabitants then were Christians. The western isles were also included ; and in the Highlands and Lowlands the rules of Iona were received ; these were more complete than Patrick left them in Ireland. As he transferred them from Scotland, and improved, corrected, and enlarged them, so did Columba in composing those of Iona. They were adapted for the seminaries of learning as much as for the churches ; these were in towns or villages through the kingdom, and were nominated *Cathair-Chuldich*, chair, or seat of the Culdees, viz., the teachers of the young, as well as preachers to the people.

It was, however, in the seminary of Iona that persons were licensed and prepared to be sent wherever

vacancies occurred which were to be supplied. We have already noticed the great care Columba took in selecting those intended for the ministry, and to have them duly qualified for the office. His successors were no less cautious in ordaining fit persons for the ministry, so that the demand for sending missionaries to distant parts continued.

The successors found it an easy and pleasant duty to discharge the functions of elders since the Picts were converted,—a work that was before Columba's time thought insurmountable, if not impossible. He alone appeared the only one capable of overcoming all the difficulties in the way.

An individual arises in an age as apparently called by Providence, and distinguishes himself more than all his contemporaries, as a great genius, or a prodigy, when his natural abilities might have been equalled by others of his age ; but, as we have seen in the life of Columba, that all is from the Lord ; when there is no extraordinary superiority of talents, nor preternatural powers given, but grace and stedfast faith, endurance and courage, and other qualities all combined in the individual ; Columba certainly far surpassed all his companions, yet he was aided by them. The successors imitated the president and the brethren.

Learned and pious men were sent from Iona to other kingdoms, when spiritual dearth was sorely felt in all Christendom, so that the good works of Columba died not with him. His pious successors, zealous and ready to undergo privations, and face dangers where they could be useful, were in high request. When the light of the word was almost extinguished, the missionaries from Iona rekindled it with greater lustre. They

taught the pure doctrine of the gospel uncontaminated with any puerile or absurd ceremonies. They introduced learning to a people that were desirous of knowledge, and had shown to the discerning the vain and idle legends which overspread other countries.

The industrious habits and holy lives of the Culdees, who were doing much good, and giving no trouble, nor laying any expenses on those they taught, excited admiration and gained esteem. The contrast between them and the clergy of Rome was observable to all men.

After the death of Columba, the brethren assembled to choose a president from their number. They took care that he should resemble his predecessor as much as possible. There was no consecration, nor anything that would indicate superiority. They were alike as to power or authority. The president was no more than the first among his equals, placed in that position by his brethren, for the purpose of maintaining order at their meetings when assembled to consult and deliberate. The constitution of Iona was in fact a regular presbytery, as has long existed in Scotland, with the slight difference of a name, the president being called Moderator, and frequently elected. Bede, observing the difference between it and the Church of Rome, calls it an unusual constitution, as he denominated Columba the Presbyter Abbot, making a distinction that partly holds, viz. *presbyteros*, presbyter or elder, *episkopos*, an overseer. Both the terms at first, therefore, meant the same, though they differed in after times. The Culdees were content with the more humble name of elder. The Roman clergy, and not their own party, called them the British

clergy,—a term appropriate enough : they really were the ancient British clergy.

Wherever the Culdees of Iona formed a new settlement, or college of presbyters, the fixed numbers of the council was twelve, in imitation of the apostles of Jesus Christ. They always adhered in church government, as well as doctrine, to the sacred Scriptures, which was their standard.

The Druids that lurked in the country and in the isles, endeavoured to do as much harm to the Culdees, the successors of Columba, as they possibly could. Many superstitions of theirs that were so long interwoven with their language were not easily eradicated, which gave the Culdees no small trouble as they laboured to enlighten the people ; but they adopted the surest method to supersede the pernicious practices by putting the Word of Truth in direct opposition to all that was false or doubtful. They followed the examples left us by him who inculcated, by his life of holiness, the doctrines and precepts of his gospel of grace. The light of the Word was spreading far and wide. Churches had been founded in places almost innumerable. We may mention Dunkeld, Abernethy, Brechin, Monimusk, &c. In all these places were retained the institutions of Iona ; nor was any superiority recognized among them.

The Church of Rome and the churches in the East had their disputes and controversies. The former would overrule all, and the Culdees were unavoidably drawn in as they would not receive her rule, nor submit to her authority. As the Culdees left us no documents, we are obliged to consider the statements of their opponents. In the south of the island, the opinions so widely



propagated often prevailed. In the north, the Culdees quoted the apostle John as their authority for departing from the dogmas of the Church of Rome.

Britain was, however, comparatively tranquil ; and Christianity, which had been preserved in the north, began to find its way southward. Bede informs us that Oswald, king of the Northumbrian Saxons, had been educated at Iona ; and no sooner had he obtained the sovereignty than he sent to the Scottish elders, requesting them to send him one, as in later times has been termed an ordained minister, that would dispense all the ordinances, and by whose ministry his subjects might be instructed in the faith.

Henceforth the Culdees prosecuted their labours among the Saxons with great activity. The brethren sent Colman, who was austere in his manners ; but as he was not acceptable to a rude and warlike people, he returned to Iona, and Aidan, as soon as ordained, was sent in his stead. He met with the kindest reception. He founded the settlement at Lindisferne, which was constructed on the model of the institution where he was educated. It became a salient point from which Christianity might make an aggressive movement on England. Such was the veneration entertained for Iona, and such was its means for instructing aspirants for the Christian ministry, that several successors of Aidan, in the Presbytery of Lindisferne, were sent hither from the primitive seat of the Culdees. While they continued the plain but most effective mode of instruction among the Anglo-Saxons, a most powerful opposition was made by the Church of Rome. The Anglo-Saxons having been converted, as mentioned in a preceding chapter, by monks sent to Britain by Gregory the Great, with

considerable success, the pope and his clergy could not bear to see the people enlightened by the Culdees.\* The clergy of Iona sent missionaries abroad as well as to England. The preceptor of Charlemagne was a Briton. The court of the great emperor derived its literary ornaments from the institutions of the west of Scotland. The extreme desire, so evident in the conduct of the Culdees to promote knowledge, was proportionable to their spiritual attainments. France, Italy, Germany, bear witness to their acquirements and zeal in preaching the gospel of grace. There was a missionary spirit inciting the Culdees in other places as well as in Iona, so that the Britons did more for Central Europe than the Church of Rome that claimed all merit.

Columbanus, whose name has been sometimes confounded with Columba, feeling in his heart the greatest desire to communicate the glad tidings of great joy to nations that were sitting in darkness, quitted Bangor in 590 A.D. with twelve other missionaries, and carried the gospel to the Burgundians, Franks, and Swiss. He died in 615. Many British missionaries, with a pious design of imparting their religious knowledge to their pagan neighbours, despised the obstacles in their way, and the dangers to which they would be made liable, crossed high seas, and penetrated the gloomy recesses of German forests, to instruct fierce uncivilized people, and soften their rough manners by the morals of the gospel.

In those ages of error and superstition, the Culdees were the only body of Christians that continued in the

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\* Bede, Jamieson.

primitive simplicity of the fathers ;—their elders were the only ministers that inculcated the pure precepts of the Christian religion, when the Church that her votaries call infallible, was full of superstitious rites and ceremonies. Her subordinate clergy were in the most deplorable state of ignorance ; so destitute of vital religion, even from the bishop in his robes to the monk in his cowl ; none was exempt from the contagion that corrupted the pure and spiritual religion of Jesus Christ. There was little to be seen, except ghostly ambition, insatiable avarice, and pious fraud. Nor was intolerable pride awanting. But why should we enlarge on a subject that is neither pleasant nor edifying. We have only to state what shows the persons that were opposed to the Culdees, that were not only obstructing the useful work in which they were employed, but using all their endeavours to become universal.

We need not say how reprehensible was the behaviour of the superior and inferior clergy of the Romish persuasion in the dark ages. Good men among them inveighed against their immorality, but they were silenced. An individual might occasionally raise his voice in condemnation of their vices. Men of piety and devotion, whose austere manners, constant studies, and simple lives ill accorded with the habits of the monks, who were professed mendicants, that imposed on the credulous multitude, while they indulged in all the pleasures and luxuries of life in their cells. How widely differed they and the Culdees, who were content with what the labours of their own hands obtained for them ! Yet they escaped not the shafts of calumny and evil report. Such has always been the case where the profane and irreligious abound ; but they were highly respected

by the good wherever they laboured, and their memories have been cherished through ages. None were more indefatigable since the age of the apostles, or more useful, yet met with less thanks from those who should have put more value on their works ; on the contrary, the good they were doing was what caused their persecutors to hate them.

When the bloody persecutions of the Anglo-Saxons made Christians exile themselves to foreign lands and remote places, many took refuge in Wales. A thousand collected together at Bangor,\* who wrought for their daily bread with their hands, and worshipped the living God. The president of this church was Dionoth, a faithful teacher. The monk Augustin, Archbishop of Canterbury, as stated in a preceding chapter, told him to acknowledge the authority of the bishop of Rome. Dionoth was the most influential member of the British Church, and though of a timid disposition, was firm in the faith. He repelled the monk's attack, A.D. 601. Augustin convoked a general assembly of British and Saxons, and demanded of Dionoth again to recognize the authority of Rome : he was firm, and resisted the extravagant pretensions of the monk. Another Briton protested against the presumption of the archbishop ; and a third exclaimed that they could not submit to the haughtiness of the Romans, nor the tyranny of the Saxons. The Scots continued firm, and could not be moved ; so Augustin failed a second time. The independence of Britain was maintained and seemed secure. Yet the formidable power of the pope, aided by the

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\* Bangor ; from *bein*, *ben*, or *pen*, a height, and *gaoire*, thrilling noise, the heart-rending wailing of the massacred Christians.

sword of the conqueror, alarmed the Britons. It was not long before they were summoned to a new council. They told Augustin "they knew no other master than Christ." The archbishop appeared astonished, and was indignant. He told the British clergy if they received not the brethren to bring them peace, they would receive the enemy who would bring them war. "If you will not unite with us to show the Saxons the way of life, you shall receive from them the stroke of death." The haughty archbishop having said this, withdrew, and occupied his last days in preparing ways to bring about his ill-omened prophecy.

Shortly after the death of Augustin, Edelfrid, an Anglo-Saxon king, who was still a heathen, collected a numerous army, and advanced towards Bangor, the centre of the British church in the south of the island. The alarm was spread through the ancient British Christians. They wept and prayed. Twelve hundred and fifty prepared themselves by fasting, met together in a retired spot to send up their prayers to God. The cruel Edelfrid observing them from a distance, demanded who they were, and what they were doing? Being told, he ordered his soldiers to fall upon the prostrated crowd. They slew twelve hundred of them. Then they proceeded to Bangor, the chief seat of learning of the Christians, and erased it to the ground. The news of the massacre filled the place with lamentations. So woful and thrilling was the voice from the height, or high hill, that it was called Ben-gaoir, Bangor.

It was believed that Augustin instigated the pagan to commit the horrid murder. The tyranny and haughtiness of the Roman bishop made many of the Anglo-Saxons return to their idols, so that south Britain

was in danger of being lost to the Church of Rome. The bishops fled into Gaul. Lawrence, Augustin's successor, was about to follow them. He saw his predecessor's work perishing, but he saved it by a miracle, as the Romish writers asserted, and the ignorant people believed.

The preference given by Oswald to the elders of Iona encouraged many to trust to his successor Oswin ; but they were cruelly disappointed.

The Anglo-Saxons who were not converted by the Romish clergy thus persecuted the Culdees in the south, and they were opposed also by the converted, as the monks that succeeded Augustin were using all their power and influence to obstruct their progress. Although their own hold of the kingdom was precarious, yet they entertained hopes of having all brought within the pale of the Church. Their head always struggled, and was gradually gaining ground in his endeavours to be supreme. Let us see how he prosecuted this object.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## The Supremacy of the Pope.

The Culdees were always acknowledged to be pious and learned. Though liable to be persecuted by the Romans from the introduction of Christianity into South Britain till the persecution ceased in all the Roman provinces, they left us nothing on record. Their rules of church government were few ; but we cannot doubt of their having writings and history on a subject so very important as the Church. They would not divulge these while the edicts of the Roman emperors were in force against them ; but, few or many as these might have been, they were lost in the bloody persecution of the Anglo-Saxons, who would destroy all the vestiges of a religion of which they had no reverence. The Christians who escaped torture and fearful death, fled with life alone, and joined their brethren in the north, and in Ireland. Those who remained in parts of the kingdom and fled to Wales, escaped not the massacre of Bangor, and their records were lost. Though the Christians who fled from persecution suffered so much, their zeal cooled not. They were indefatigable in spreading the new religion wherever they went, and they gave an impulse to the labours of the brethren, who readily received them. In the Roman provinces north of the Tweed, the Culdees had their church government, as we have already observed in the fourteenth

chapter. Patrick transplanted them into a foreign soil.

But, notwithstanding the sufferings of the Culdees, they were by no means few or inconsiderate, as we may infer from the standing they made against the papal aggression, and more especially after the pope obtained the supreme power over Christendom. The Culdees were the only Christian teachers that permanently resisted, and never owned the supremacy. Bishops and others who were within the pale of the Church, opposed the enormous power for a while ; they, however, were obliged to yield. How the pope at length obtained the extraordinary ascendancy, is a portion of Church history of which no ecclesiastic is ignorant. The general reader may not know this ; it is not to satisfy his curiosity we write of it, but to illustrate the character of the Culdee ; and, as we take the information from Romish writers, the Roman Catholic will not take umbrage at repeating facts of history, nor will the Protestant hesitate to believe what Romish writers have recorded.

The supremacy of the pope was not acknowledged by his inferiors till the year of our Lord 755, when his temporal dominion was established. Much was the opposition made to every Roman pontiff during the space of four hundred years before the supremacy was acknowledged ; yet, as every pope made advances, though not in equal degree, some ground was always gained, and the progress made was gradual and not inconsiderable. As it has always been the practice of the Church of Rome to retain what is given her, and to give nothing away, she was daily increasing in wealth and power, and assumed authority over all princes and people ; yet, although the supremacy of the head of the Church was



generally acknowledged in the eighth century, the Byzantine history informs us of the opposition made to his presumed eminence. The churches of Gaul and Spain attributed as much authority to the Church of Rome as they thought suited their own dignity, and was consistent with their interest ; but in Italy his supreme authority was obstinately resisted, since the Bishop of Ravenna and other bishops refused implicit submission to his orders. The ancient Britons under the ministry of the Culdees, always persisted in retaining their religious liberty. Neither the threats nor the promises of the Church of Rome would make them submit to the authority of the ambitious pontiff.

But is it not surprising that the popes had taken so long a time in obtaining a general consent ? The enlightened prelates who made some opposition, could be overcome, as whoever in the Roman see would raise a voice against the head of the Church, that challenged a right to rule over all Christendom, could be easily silenced, since he was alleged to be the successor of St Peter, was the keeper of the keys, and held the consciences of the princes, and could govern the people who were their subjects. Their whole source of knowledge being through him, the Word of God was a sealed book. The religion of Christ was almost unknown beneath so many innovations introduced into the ordinances, and new tenets that were to be implicitly acknowledged, which might be dignified by imposture and fanaticism.

But all the additional power and influence of every successive pope that were accumulated during so many ages, would not avail them were they to adhere to the plain truth. They were aware of it, and had recourse to other means.

The decretals were brought forward ; these contributed most of all to extend and confirm the supremacy of the pope. They were published in the ninth century. They consisted of letters, decrees, and canons, or ecclesiastical rules, ascribed to the bishops of Rome from the first time mentioned, and in which they were made to give directions, and issue such commands as they would have done had papacy then been rampant. Men were made to believe that the ceremonies and forms of church government then established was ancient and apostolic, not as they were in reality the inventions of a later date. The book for a long time received the sanction of those in power.

These forged memorials were procured by the popes to establish their supremacy by the authority of supposed acts of councils and records of the first ages of the Church, to stop the mouths of those who were disposed to set bounds to their usurpations. They employed persons of ingenuity and zeal to forge conventions that would answer their purpose, that they might be clothed with the same spiritual majesty as they feigned their predecessors possessed.

The decretals were the productions of an obscure writer, who, to make the world believe that they were collected by the illustrious bishop of Seville, prefixed his name to them. Some of them were published in the eighth century, but in the ninth they were produced with an air of ostentation that should demonstrate the power of the pope. The decision of a certain Roman council, that was not known till then, was likewise alleged in behalf of the same cause, but which must have proceeded from the same source. They alike deserved to be stigmatized ; yet the decrees of the pretended

council contributed much to advance the views of the Romish pontiffs, and exalt them in authority and jurisdiction. Bishops of prudence and sagacity detected the frauds, opposed the spurious decretals with zeal and vehemence, and protested against their being received among the laws of the Church ; but the Romish pontiffs silenced them : so they conquered the opposition made to their forgeries.

It was easy in those times of superstition and ignorance, to make the people believe as apostolic any ceremonies, order, or form of government established, in whatever manner they were proposed by the pope and the clergy, although they were the most shameful and barefaced fabrications. The book passed current in the world, and the canon law was formed on it.

In the decretals, letters were written to persons that lived long before the date of them. Documents were recorded in years of magistrates who were not then in office, and fragments of authors of different periods were joined together to which some ancient names were fixed.

Though Roman Catholics have since acknowledged the decretals to be spurious, and rejected the absurdities they have originated, they are still cherished and adduced as authentic by the champions of a Church that must not undergo any changes, as she is believed by her votaries to be infallible.

The pontiffs of Constantinople and Rome opposed each other with such animosity as created tumults and dissensions among the sacred order, aiming at unlimited supremacy over the Christian Church. This ambitious design succeeded in the West, while in the East the arrogant pretensions were scarcely respected where the

Bishop of Constantinople made head against the presumed authority. Many, however, were favourable to the lordly demands of the Roman pontiff, as appears from the expression of Eunodius, the flatteries of Symmachus, a prelate of dubious fame. The extravagant panegyrist, among other important assertions, maintained that the Roman pontiff was constituted judge in the place of God, which place he filled as vicegerent of the Most High ; but emperors and nations were not yet ready to submit to the yoke of servitude which the See of Rome was arrogantly imposing on the Christian Church. But the daily increase from the growth of superstitions, and the remorse of the wicked, augmented the power of the pontiffs so much as to enable them to rule almost all nations.

It is surprising that the Culdees could withstand such power. The pope ruled over all others : kingdoms and nations submitted to him ; yet the Anglo-Saxons were in a doubtful state. The greatest part of them returned to their ancient superstitions, and the whole of South Britain might have been lost to the Church of Rome, were it not for the queen, her priest, and Wilfred. When they succeeded in persuading Oswy to adopt their creed, then all the states he added to his own by treacheries and assassinations were added to Kent, that was within the Roman See.

It was difficult to choose between them. The Church of Rome made high pretensions, but was not very scrupulous in receiving into her widely-increasing pale all who consented to receive her rule. The prejudices of a people recently persuaded to adopt her doctrines, not from persuasion, were strong in favour of idolatry. The Romish clergy, therefore, had but a slippery hold of the

south of the kingdom of Great Britain. The Culdees might be said to have none ; yet they had the gospel of truth, the light of which revealed the errors of the one, and the false gods of the other. It was in vain, therefore, that the Romish clergy used all the means in their power to persuade or enforce them to submit to their rule.

Since the Conquest, the new religion was not tolerated. The missionaries from Iona were dependent on the lives of individuals, and subject to the caprice of the most powerful ; but the Romish missionaries being sure of obtaining all they desired, as their head was supreme on earth, used their endeavours, not to spread the light of truth over the land, but to disseminate their dogmas. The pope already looked on the south of the island in his power, and must have the north too. The policy adopted was the most sagacious that man could devise.

Such as took no trouble to examine or to inquire, readily received every new tenet. The Culdees looked to the Word of God, and would receive none else. That was what kept them always distinct and separate from the Romans. With these the Scriptures were sealed. They knew no more than what their clergy thought proper to reveal to them, and thought themselves not responsible for the truth. Romanism is a convenient religion, and acceptable to all who will not search for themselves. The indolent, the careless, as well as the credulous, prefer it.

The Culdees taught from the Word alone, and made use of the faculties bestowed on them for the end assigned. Whoever receives the Word in its purity and simplicity, will be influenced and guided by the Spirit.

The Christians under all persecution, were made sensible how much the Lord had done for them. It was not to this world they chiefly looked. When burning incense on the altar of false gods might have saved them from tortures and a cruel death, they saw the abomination of it; they would not commit an act that others deemed only ceremony, but which they believed to be idolatry, should they obtain pardon, or even gain the the whole world. Their late persecutors gave them not such option; yet they endured their utmost fury with stedfast faith.

But it was their endurance, whether called obstinacy or resignation, to which the Roman pontiff and his clergy looked, more than to their preaching all the truth. They thought themselves the proper judges, and would not permit to their flocks the use of reason in spiritual matters. The Druids concealed their mysteries from the people. The Romish clergy taught other tenets rather than the revealed Word, and endeavoured to make religion subservient.

The supremacy enabled the pope to exercise his power over potentates. He obliged them to submit to the rule of the Church. There never was such tyranny as that which brought conscience into bondage. The despotism was not over the Roman empire, but extended to all nations in the world where the Word was not heard. The sagacity of the designing, frame such rules and dogmas as best suit the corruption of the human nature; this, too, was a difficulty against which the Culdees had to struggle. When they preached the pure doctrine of the gospel, the many would not be inclined to listen, or would choose what was more congenial to their propensities. But God put in the hearts

of others to attend to the Word which is the power of God unto salvation ; and the few who were stedfast and faithful, would not be prevailed to forsake the true path. Will this not show how Culdeeism continued in these isles during so long a series of centuries, notwithstanding all the difficulties and discouragements in the way ?

But the Culdees were not patient and submissive alone to the ruling powers ; they were faithful servants of the Lord. They would not be silenced by any that preached or taught contrary to the written Word. They raised their voice in witnessing the truth, regardless of all interest ; and the people would hear what the Romish clergy were most desirous of concealing from them. The Culdees had the examples of the apostles before them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## The Culdees oppose the Pope's Supremacy.

Whoever would not acknowledge the supremacy of the pope, and would not receive the dogmas of the Church of Rome, would have to endure the infliction of the greatest power of Christendom. Kings and princes yielded to the Roman pontiff; and was it likely that a body of Christians, few, indeed, compared to the numbers of a Church that was daily growing in power and influence, would have ventured to dispute the pope's right to the supremacy? The Culdees looked to a higher power, and walked in the light of the Word. They could not expect to be allowed to proceed on their way unmolested, quiet and inoffensive as they were. In their humble condition they might seem too insignificant before a power that subjected nations and empires; but their assiduity and success in spreading the light of the gospel among the people, and disseminating knowledge, were in direct opposition to the method adopted by the pope and his clergy, who became jealous of their works that had been so much appreciated, and were determined to put a stop to their progress of usefulness; or rather, not to suffer them to live without the pale of the Church, nor to enlighten the people more than they saw fit and useful to be dispensed.

The Culdees were not under the dominion of the pope,



and how could he prevent them ? They would teach, but could he make them teach tenets which they never acknowledged ? They taught Christ crucified, and would believe in none else. Although he ascended into heaven, he told he would be with his own to the end of time. He is the Head of the Church, which is catholic or universal. The Culdees were, therefore, in direct opposition to the supremacy in faith and practice. Few as the primitive Christians appeared, they were strong in the power of the Word. The name and profession of the Culdees have been long established in the British isles ; and the light that was widely spread through their instrumentality could not be easily extinguished.

The Church of Rome consists not of elements of indifference and complacency ; her policy is of a more subtle composition. The little as well as the great must submit to her. Every remote country, as well as whole nations, must be brought within her pale. The Culdees were content with the humblest state. They could not be accused of any of the insubordinate passions ; and they were unjustly represented as obstinate by those who knew not their faith.

Thus were the Romish and British clergy in direct opposition. How could they meet and coincide ? Would they use reason, and submit to revelation ? The one would not, they looked to the supreme head on earth ; the other only acknowledged Christ as the Head of the Church. As to worldly matters, the Romish clergy claimed the pre-eminence ; but they had little chance when reference was made to the written Word,—the only sure criterion in spiritual matters. All their tenets and dogmas were disregarded, and would not avail them in the least ! Their traditions

were like the traditions of the Pharisees. Their own knowledge of the Scriptures, which they kept from the people, was scanty, and was growing less as their ceremonies were increasing. They had little chance were they to appeal to the Word of God,—the sure and infallible test. As the Culdees studied the Scriptures, they were ready to prove from them all that they asserted, and would maintain by revealed truth. While, then, the Culdees had always the better in argument, the Romans resorted to power, and were ready to meet their opponents, not in the fair field of reasoning, but in the entangled way of sophistry. The ingenuity with which the hierarchy has been formed was wonderful, when it could stand against reason, judgment, and revelation. The superior and inferior clergy were as zealous as the head of the Church in maintaining his power. There is a ramification through the whole system, so that what is done in the Vatican is simultaneously spread through all Christendom.

The pope regarded the British isles already subjected to his sway. It was the business of bishops, priests, and monks to make all submit to him. We shall soon see the means employed in making all serve the mother Church.

The youthful Oswald died at the head of his army while repelling an invasion of the idolatrous Mercians, A.D. 642. He left a name that was dear to the Church of the British isles. It was then that papacy was becoming rampant. Oswald was succeeded by his brother Oswy, whose religion, although instructed in the doctrine of the Britons, was external. His heart was full of ambitious schemes. He envied his relative Oswin, an amiable king, who was much beloved by his people.

Oswy conceived a deadly hatred towards him, and got him assassinated where he took shelter with a chief that he had loaded with favours, but who betrayed him. The gentle Aidan died of sorrow at his cruel fate.\* Such was the first exploit of that monarch who surrendered England to the papacy. Oswy's wife, the proud Eanfeld, was of the Romish communion. Romanus, her priest, zealously maintained the rites of the Latin Church. He and the princess would often converse together on the means of winning over Northumberland to the papacy. Wilfred, a Northumbrian youth, was one day admitted to an audience of the queen. He observed to her the way the Scotch missionaries from Iona taught, and remarked that it was not perfect, as they followed not the forms of the Church of Rome. He was of an enterprizing character, and proposed that he would go to Rome, and learn from the successors of the apostle the true way! She approved of the object, and by her assistance and direction he set out for Italy. He appeared to the Roman clergy to be a young man of talents, and a fit person to serve their interest in Britain. He soon discovered that they possessed much more power than the British clergy, and his thirst for distinction and promotion was influenced at the court of the pontiffs. If he could succeed in making England subject to papa, there was no dignity to which he might not aspire. He saw the materials on which he was to work. A fanatical queen could influence her husband, who was under no religious convictions; and if the Scottish missionaries were removed, or induced to co-operate, he could always bring over the people,

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\* Bede.

especially such as were not well grounded in the doctrines they professed, as well as those who were still unconverted. Notwithstanding the great success of the Augustine monks, many in South Britain were pagans, when not a few were primitive Christians that continued free or unknown during the long struggle between the Britons and Anglo-Saxons, which lasted a hundred and thirty years.

The votaries of the Church of Rome made no scruple in using craft and deceit to gain proselytes. Wilfred, on his return from Italy, came to an understanding with the queen and Romanus on the subject.

The elders of Iona could not shut their eyes on the dangers which threatened Northumberland. Finan was sent hither to supply Aidan's place : he was an ordained presbyter. Seeing the progress popery was making at court, he opposed the pontiff's agents, and their frequent contests confirmed him in his opposition. After his death, Colman was sent ; he was a simple-minded man, but had a stout heart, and he was determined to show a bold front to their wiles.

The three combined votaries of the Church of Rome were resolute in their plans to destroy the British Church. Wilfred prepared his attacks by adroit insinuations. The bigoted Eanfled zealously aided the Romish missionary. No opportunities were allowed to slip. Oswy was assailed in his domestic circle. Discussions were incessantly raised on the controverted doctrines. Men's minds were incited : Romanists already assumed the air of conquerors. The British often withdrew full of anxiety and fear. Oswy would incline to either side as affection or interest led him : he had usurped the throne of Deira, having assassinated the king. The

papists had more powerful motives than coveting Northumberland. Penda fell in battle in 654 : Oswy conquered his estates, excepting a portion governed by Peada, his son-in-law, the son of Penda ; but he fell in a conspiracy, which was said to have been excited by his wife, the daughter of Oswy. The latter contemplated the conquest of Mercia, and of uniting the greatest part of England under his sceptre. Kent alone at that time acknowledged the jurisdiction of Rome. In other provinces the British clergy preached the gospel. If Oswy were gained by the three zealous agents, it was evident that all England would have submitted to the pope.

Oswy was troubled in mind, and knew not where to find rest. The blood of Oswin, the premature death of Aidin, and other atrocious deeds that might have been unknown to the public, were coming into the recollection of the king whenever he was at peace with neighbours, or had time to reflect on his past life. Though his plans of ambition and his active days in worldly matters occupied his time so that he little thought of discriminating between right and wrong. Wilfred was sharp-sighted enough to observe the disquietudes of the king, and the queen also so searching, as to have found out the secrets of his heart, which she communicated to the priest, who, fanning the flame of hope and fear, frequently talked of the peace and grace of Mother Church. The king was not easily persuaded to change his opinions, where strong interest or a powerful motive was wanting. The queen proposed to refer the subject to learned men of the two persuasions, thinking, no doubt, that her clergy would overpower the modest and peaceable British, and that Oswy would be convinced and converted. She invited

Agilbert, a Saxon bishop, to the conference : he was a friend of Wilfred, who arrived in Northumberland with a priest named Agatham. It was a contest very unequal as to numbers and influential men, and it was evident that the British clergy must yield. The meeting took place at Whitby. On the side of the bishop and said priest were Wilfred and Romanus ; Colman and elders of the Britons opposed them. There was one Cedda, an Englishman by birth, by ordination a Scotchman, a most active missionary of the Culdees, who had received consecration from a bishop, but was ordained by the elders of Iona ; he was everywhere treated with respect and consideration, and was set apart in this holy conference. Whenever the priests were called upon to settle certain doctrines or ceremonies, instead of referring solely to the Word of God, the fountain of all light, they referred to the canons of the Church, and maintained that St Peter had done so at Rome, and gave them the name of apostolic, although we but shortly had seen the source from which they took at least some of these, namely, the decretals.

King Oswy was the first to speak, and thus expressed himself : " As servants of one and the same God, we hope to enjoy the same inheritance in heaven ; why, then, should we not have the same rule here below ? Let us inquire which is the true one, and follow it."

" Those who have ordained and sent me here," said Colman, " and gave me the rule which I observe, are beloved of God. Let us beware how we despise their teaching, for it is the teaching of Columba, of the blessed evangelist John, and of the churches over which that apostle presided."

" As for us," boldly spoke Wilfred, " our custom is

that of Rome, where the holy apostles Peter and Paul taught. We found it in Italy and Gaul ; nay, it is spread over every nation. Shall the Picts and Britons, cast on these two islands, on the very confines of the ocean, dare to contend against the whole world ? However holy your Columba might have been, will you prefer him to the prince of the apostles, to whom Christ said, *Thou art Peter, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*"

Wilfred was too artful for Colman. He brought his authority from the prince of the apostles, while his opponent mentioned an elder. Oswy, whose idol was earthly greatness, did not hesitate between the statements and opinions of the humble worshippers of Jesus Christ, and the power and authority assumed by the pontiff and his clergy.

"It is true, Colman," exclaimed he, "that these words were addressed by our Lord to Peter : can you prove that the like power was given to your Columba ?"

Colman explained the passage, that it was given to all the apostles the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. The king, not understanding the explanation, nor observing the cunning of Wilfred in substituting the elder of Iona in place of the apostles, he was easily brought over to the side in power : he, by the continual solicitations of the queen, and his love of power, was satisfied in his own mind. Oswy explained, "Peter is the doorkeeper, I will obey him, lest when I appear at the gate there should be no one to open to me." All on the one side gave their assent to the king's opinion. Oswy was made a convert to the Romish persuasion, and the liberty of the southern Britons was lost.

Colman saw with grief and consternation Oswy bending the knee to the Romish priest. He withdrew with those who would not bend beneath a foreign yoke, and returned to North Britain. Thirty-six Anglo-Saxons and a great number of Britons shook off the dust of their feet against the tenets of the Romish priests. Determined to repel the erroneous doctrines and the illegitimate dominion of the pope, they ascribed their misfortune to a horrible conspiracy planned by the iniquitous ambition of the foreign monks ; and the bards, in their songs, cursed the negligent ministers who defended not the flock of the Lord against the ravenous wolves.

Wilfred was rewarded by Oswy, and was made bishop of Northumberland. He visited Paris, and received consecration, according to the ritual of the Church of Rome ; returned, and displayed his exaltation by external pageantry and haughty bearing. Oswy, with all the zeal of a new convert, ceased not to repeat, " that the Roman Church was the catholic and apostolic Church ;" and gave all his meditations to the means of converting his subjects, hoping by so doing to redeem his own soul.\*

Since the Roman clergy have been so prosperous in their ways before the pontiff obtained the supremacy, we need not be surprized at their success, when princes and people could be wielded according to the will of the Church. Wilfred having done so much for Mother Church, looked for the highest dignities, and considered himself worthy of the highest preferment ; but he was disappointed.

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\* *Horæ Britannicæ*



## CHAPTER XIX.

The Romans use novel proceedings against the Culdees.

The Romish clergy seeing how little the Culdees regarded the supremacy of the pope, and knowing from experience how unfit they were themselves to argue with them, they thought of other ways in which they expected to succeed. They offered dignities and preferment to such as would acknowledge the pope's supremacy, and receive the rule of the Church. Adamnan was the first who was tempted to accept of the offers. He was learned and talented, but wanted that firmness that appeared in all the Culdees who opposed the papal aggression. He was sent as missionary to South Britain, being ordained by the elders of Iona. He was the first to swerve from the faith once delivered to the saints, seduced by the great promises made to him were he to bring over the brethren to the faith of the *infallible Church*, as the prelates termed the Church of Rome.

Adamnan, fearing at first to return to Iona, went to Ireland, where he had some success in seducing some Culdees of that kingdom. Ireland, as has been stated in a preceding chapter, was famous for her learning and piety during a period of three hundred years ; but after the seventh century an extraordinary change happened. A tribe of Scandinavians, known by the appellation of Ostmen, invaded the western islands in the beginning of the ninth century. They plundered the country, and

took possession of a great portion of it, which they held for several years under a chief of their own, who reigned over a territory larger than the domains of any of their own princes of the ninth and tenth centuries. Those invaders, having been driven from the island by the king of Meath, returned with reinforcements in the middle of the ninth century, and reasserted their superiority. After much bloodshed they established themselves permanently over a tract of country, and continued to be one of the most powerful septs or races of Ireland. They were called Ostmen from the country they left, and the leader they followed, and from them have descended some of the mixed race of Ireland.

In those wars and troubles that disturbed the peace of Ireland, learning was much neglected, and piety was gradually disappearing in many parts of the kingdom. The Culdees experienced a decline. No great man arose among them, and the change since the seventh century became apparent. The Scandinavian race were hostile to the religion of the country, and they despised literature. The Irish being partly subdued, Roman missionaries were sent among them, as the times seemed to favour them.

Adamnan, elated with his success in Ireland, thought of trying his influence among the brethren of Iona, and he might expect to be better rewarded were he to gain over some of them. He assumed courage from his late success. It was in the west of Scotland the Romish clergy were most desirous of making conquest; and were they to gain ground in the chief seat of learning and religion, they might hope of being soon able to bring other parts within the pale of their Church.

Adamnan was bound up with promises and expecta-

tions, and he returned to Iona full of hope of succeeding over the brethren in bringing them to the Church of Rome ; but he entirely failed. Although ordained, as has been stated, by the elders of Iona, and although esteemed by them, when they sent him to the south, for his learning, his piety, and energy, and was thought worthy of the trust, he would not be received by them as delegate of the Church of Rome ; nor could he persuade any of the brethren to accept of rank or dignities : no prospect of promotion could make them swerve from the true path.

As Adamnan could entertain no hopes of succeeding in Scotland, he went back to Ireland, to co-operate with the missionaries of the pope, and used his influence among the Culdees, persuading them to imitate him, and convert the people from Culdeeism and paganism. Under all these circumstances, the inhabitants of the western isle lost much of the pre-eminence they justly gained in the former ages. They were daily declining from the faith of their fathers. Once the Irish gave way to the agents of the Church of Rome, the celebrity of their literature as well as piety became tarnished. It was not henceforth difficult to make them submit to any rules, or to receive any ceremonies, and practise all rites with the greatest facility. In every succeeding century were they brought in nearer connexion with the Mother Church, and were seceding from the straight path. Yet some Culdee teachers, and hearers too, continued, notwithstanding the assiduity and persuasion of the Romanists, to perform their religious office after the rules of Patrick and Columba, and remained untainted by foreign dogmas during a long period of time : for in the council of Cashiel, convoked by Henry the Second,

in the year 1172, the Irish were made to pray for the dead. Compulsory means were used to make those that were not wholly reconciled to the tenets and practices of the Church of Rome, to yield to their rules ; and that in consequence of complaints made by bishops of the nonconformity of those who differed from them. In a letter, dated 1170, Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, complains that in these times certain false bishops of Ireland (as he denominated the Culdees, on pretence of the barbarism of the Scottish language), though they received not the imposition of hands, discharged the episcopal functions to the people ; and he enjoins the clergy to prohibit the episcopal administration of all belonging to a barbarous nation, as of uncertain ordination.

This shows how far this nation had declined in learning and religion since the days of Patrick and Columba, and how the Church of Rome was advancing by her deep policy, which proved ultimately her superiority. Here, too, is a specious pretence for discontinuing the language of the people in their ministrations and ordinances. The ritual of the Church of Rome was to be imposed on all in a language that was not understood by the people. The British clergy were to be silenced, as they spoke the whole truth in a language the congregation knew. Yes, by compulsion or seduction.

## CHAPTER XX.

Some of the Kings of Scotland unfavourable to the Culdees ;  
others support them.

Since the Anglo-Saxons were converted in England, persecution of the new religion ceased. The Picts while pagans waged war with their neighbours the Scots, not on account of religion or superstition, but for territory and spoil. The pope sought to subdue the British clergy, and silence them, as he had done the bishops who raised their voice against his usurpation. He so far succeeded in South Britain and also in Ireland ; but in North Britain the Culdees strictly adhered to the Word of truth ; and they maintained their pristine simplicity and integrity, amid all the troubles and trials of a changeable life. While the Scottish clergy continued in the true faith, the people adhered to their favoured pastors, who dreaded not the thunders of the Vatican ; and the superior and inferior clergy of the Church of Rome had little chance with the tried and approved ancient clergy of the British isles. But when the rulers of the land began to change their opinions, the subjects were apt to give their assent to modes and tenets that assumed imposing forms, as a body that are easily swayed. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, were they to quit their idolatry, would have been great and permanent ; but the change was mostly external, and vital religion never reached the heart. The display of

all the pageantry of the Church within whose pale they were brought, could not fail to attract the attention of a young prince, on whose mind external objects made a deeper impression than what regarded invisible and spiritual things. We have already seen how two queens have been instrumental in converting the pagans, and we now come to record the influence of a third in turning the primitive Christians of the kingdom from the Church of their fathers to the one of aliens.

Edgar Atheling and his sisters, the last descendants of the great king Alfred, and the legitimate heirs of the throne of England, mistrusting the specious friendship of William the Conqueror, resolved on seeking an asylum from dangers which awaited them in England, with their mother's kindred in Germany. Their father, Edward Atheling, known in history by the surname of the Outlaw, had married Agatha, the daughter of the emperor Henry II. The party consisted of Edgar, his widowed mother, and her two daughters, Margaret and Christina. The vessel that carried them was driven by stress of weather into the Firth of Forth. Malcolm, then reigning king of Scotland, A.D. 1057, was a son of Duncan, murdered by Macbeth, and had but a short time prior to this occurrence, defeated and slain the regicide. The youthful monarch was so much struck with the beauty of Margaret, the elder sister, that he, after the exiles had been a short time in the country, proposed and received her hand in marriage.

The first thing that Margaret did on becoming queen-consort of Scotland, was to write to Turgot, a Saxon monk, prior of Durham, to come to her court. She appointed him her confessor, and he assisted her in

reforming the rude manners of the Scots, and in educating her children, who were brought up under her own superintendence. Her sister Christina devoted herself to a religious life, became abbess of Romsey, and would have the infant princess, daughter of Margaret, hurried into the cloister. But Malcolm was a man of superior talents, and it required all his firmness to defeat the project. Although this king could neither read nor write, he possessed in no small degree the natural affections and domestic virtues. He was a fond husband and affectionate parent ; but he allowed Margaret to possess too much influence in religious matters, and in directing his councils.

We need not say how much the queen and her sister the abbess, with Turgot her confessor, would have done to any who should oppose the rites and ceremonies of their own Church. The pope's supremacy was almost universally acknowledged, but strenuously opposed, in Scotland ; yes, by the Culdees and their faithful adherents. They would have suffered rather than yielded, so stedfast were they in the faith. Malcolm could have supported or have done the greatest injury to the British Church at this time. As Alexander had prevented the pope's legate from interfering with his subjects, Malcolm might have set the pope and his clergy at defiance ; but he yielded to his queen and her coadjutors in religious matters, of which he was but imperfectly informed ; and they embraced every opportunity of bringing his subjects over to their own persuasion. It was not to purge the Church, or enlighten the clergy, that the zealous votaries laboured. The predominancy and profligacy of the Romish clergy were more detrimental

to the pure religion of Jesus Christ than druidism or polytheism.

Though in aspect the Romish persuasion was not so fierce, it was in design no less dangerous. Art and cunning were employed in every way possible ; sometimes proceeding slowly and warily, at other times hastily, as circumstances favoured. The most effectual was in advancing the views of aspirants to fame and dignity, when individuals presented themselves ; and such were not rare, as the ruling powers encouraged them. Whoever could be prevailed on to submit to the rules of Mother Church, were immediately invested with the dignities, and enriched with the emoluments. The parochial churches were preserved for them, after the faithful and stedfast Culdees resigned them, with the lands held in possession, rather than submit to any earthly power in matters of lasting importance, which was no less than the salvation of the immortal soul. The Roman clergy, then, had taken possession of the churches in part, and soon left but a small portion to the Culdees.

When the king and court countenanced the prelates, very great changes took place through the kingdom : the churches were changed in name as well as modes of worship. These will be explained elsewhere ; let it suffice here to say, that the places of worship and seats of learning were made cells and monasteries, and through time the first names were lost and soon forgot. The Culdees themselves were not called by their proper names, or were mentioned by writers with a slight distinction. Columba, for instance, was named a presbyter-abbot.

The land the Culdees held in possession were given to



aspirants to rank and wealth. As these increased, and the people followed the examples of their superiors, the Culdees began to decline, not in faith, but in numbers. The faithful retired into remote parts, leaving their places of worship and their maintenance, rather than forego the pure and undefiled religion of Jesus Christ.\*

Thus the missionary monks of Rome not only dispelled the Culdees from South Britain, but, following the intolerant policy of their Church, pursued them to the farthest boundaries of the North. What chiefly incited their hostility was the want of prelacy in the Culdean system more than their rejection of other points, such as superstition and vain ceremonies. They were aware that it was owing to want of prelacy that the Culdees kept apart, and were not connected with the great body of Christians, or catholics, as they called themselves. The introduction of prelacy, they were convinced, was the surest means by which the scriptural worship and church government, held by the early Scottish constitution, was to be overturned. This had been tried elsewhere, and was found effectual. But England's influence and example were the direct causes of the corruption and subversion of Scotland's ancient true faith.

The Scottish kings who passed some of their younger days in England, led also to this disastrous result, especially Malcolm Canmore, and David I., who returned to Scotland prejudiced in favour of the pomp and splendour of prelacy.

The Church of Rome having now gained the ascendancy in Scotland, David founded a considerable number

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\* Keith, Jamieson.

of churches and monasteries for the reception of the priests and monks of said Church. At this period of time, the considerable abbacies in the kingdom took their rise.

So the monarchs who were prepossessed in favour of what was witnessed in England erected similar buildings in their own kingdom, and countenanced the modes of worship that appeared to them preferable. They endeavoured to organize and endow hierarchy, and the ruinous results soon became apparent. The best of the Scottish clergy opposed the innovations, but their endeavours were of little avail, when their ambitious and less scrupulous brethren were ready to grasp at the wealth and honours offered them. This enabled the archbishop of Canterbury, who was using all endeavours to assert the supremacy everywhere, to make use of the power given him, and the opportunities offered, and was aided by Margaret, whose influence was so great in Scotland.

The Culdees always adhered to their ancient form. Each presbytery had a president to manage their affairs and direct their missions ; but as they assumed not the title of bishop, with the authority attached to the council of Cealhythe, they refused to keep communion with them ; the missionaries being chosen and ordained by the members of these societies, and were considered secular clergymen.

Ambitious men went from Scotland to Rome to be advanced, and returned with authority to bring the Scots under subjection to the Roman See. The Culdees opposed one named Boniface, in his attempts to withdraw the people from the obedience to Christ, and reproached him with the practices of the Church of Rome, and cor-

rupting the doctrine of Christ, by setting forth rites and ceremonies that were not scriptural.

A change took place in the government of the state as well as in the religion of the country, after Malcolm Canmore removed the court from the Highlands to the low country, then called Maæta.\* The north-west portion of Scotland was much neglected. Saxons were received into the south and east, and every encouragement was given them to settle in the richest part of the kingdom. The queen, the abbess, and priest, would have all the inhabitants accept of the rules of their Church. As the manners of England was adopted, the language also was undergoing a change. The Saxon and the British were spoken in the same country and promiscuously by the people that lived together, and thence arose the Scottish language, which is no dialect, but a compound of the Saxon and the British.

Alexander first succeeded his brother Edgar. He was the third son of Malcolm. He mounted the throne in 1106, and defended with spirit and sound policy the independence of the Church of Scotland against the archbishop of Canterbury and York, and the hostile interference of the pope. He employed all his energy and influence against other pretensions, restraining the encroachments of the clergy.

In the reign of Alexander III., who equalled his predecessors in firmness, and surpassed them in sagacity, the ancient British Church found a resolute patron and defender. A summons by the papal legate, addressed to the clergy of Scotland, commanding them to attend his court at York, was pertinaciously resisted, as be-

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\* From Magh, a plain or field.

ing an infringement on the ancient privileges. When an attempt was made to levy money on the cathedrals, or parish churches, the king would not allow any to enter his kingdom for the purpose. In both cases the opposition proved successful ; yet that was not all. The Scottish clergy openly disclaimed obedience to the canons for regulating the affairs in this country, they being enacted by the papal legate in England, and aware of their own strength, they assembled in public at Perth, from which place they promulgated rules of their own, and boldly asserted their independence. In this manner was the opposition, began by Alexander III. maintained by the courage and resolution of his successor.

Complaints were made to king Alexander that the Culdees were become lax in their worship, as they disregarded the rights of the Romish Church, and as they performed not at the altar, when they were left not a corner of the building or the religious edifice ; and because they would worship neither angels nor saints. The Culdees always worshipped after the manner of their fathers, and according to Scripture. They were persuaded that while men lived in this world they could help one another, but that the Son of God alone could intercede for them in another world. They made honourable mention in their public worship of holy men deceased, for their exemplary life, and their hope at death through faith in the Redeemer ; but not for their propitiation for sins. They confessed to God alone. They rejected celibacy. They would receive no innovations of the Church with which they never had communion. They believed and taught the doctrines of the everlast-

ing gospel ; and while their monarchs stood firm by them, they defied pope and monk.

Several Scotchmen were excommunicated by the pope. Clement was denounced a heretic, as he contended against the forms of the Catholic Church, and had two sons, as imputed against him, in adultery, though they were born in lawful wedlock ; it being alleged that marriage was unlawful in holy orders. He acknowledged them to be his sons ; whereas, had he called them his nephews, and his wife a spiritual sister, he might escape without accusation. He was given over to the secular power, and committed to the flames.\*

Gilbert Murray, in his speech in 1176, makes honourable allusion to the clergy of Iona, and of the independence of the Church of Scotland. He spoke before the archbishop of St Angelrot, Northampton. This Gilbert was of the family of Moray.

The disputes which the Romish clergy had with the Culdees were about money, land, and privileges. They had recourse to those in power to deprive them of all, considering that would be the surest and shortest way to reduce them. They found that disputing with them on religious matters, would only make them lose their cause. They found it not easy to eradicate the veneration accorded to the Culdees, for piety, charity, and superior learning. Roman missionaries were necessitated to use cunning and artifice, yes, low and mean devices, when they failed in argument.

In 1127, Gregory, abbot of Dunkeld, was made bishop, and Andrew, his successor, bishop of Caithness, and many similar promotions were taking place in

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\* Mosheim, ii. 273.

Scotland, while the same method had been adopted and practiced in Ireland with success, to overthrow the power of the Culdees in that island, where prelacy succeeded better than in Scotland.

Culdees were expelled from Dunkeld in the year Gregory the abbot was made bishop. They were gradually removed from their seats of learning, which their opponents, coming into power, occupied ; yet the compromise subdued not the spirit of the elders. They would sooner depart from all possessions than swerve from the true path.

Thus were the temporal emoluments of the Culdees abridged in the reign of David I. ; yet it took two centuries ere the metropolitans succeeded in extirpating the Culdees from St Andrews. David II. ordered them to be received like other canons, with all their possessions, if they were willing to adopt the character of the regulars ; or, if they refused to comply, that the Culdees then living would be permitted to retain their possessions during their natural lives. This deed was enacted about the year 1255.

We see how every means were used in Scotland to reduce the people into papal subjection. But the British clergy were not so easily subdued, nor were those who were instructed by them ready to receive foreign tenets and ceremonies. Queen Margaret survived her fame in her zeal and endeavours to bring the Scots under the Roman yoke.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## The Culdees persecuted by the Norwegians.

While the Culdees were opposing papal aggression, and ill supported by some of the sovereigns in this kingdom, new enemies assailed them in the western isles. The Hebudæ, or Hebrides, were time immemorial in the possession of a Gothic race, who obtained a part of North Britain, we know not how long before the Christian era. They and the Gael, a part of whose land they seized and held during many centuries, waged interminable war. They then and since went under the names of Scots and Picts. Their kingdom at last being overthrown, they lost the western islands likewise, and their name. The Scots, who were afterwards known as Highlanders and Lowlanders, took possession of the whole country which they originally inhabited. The isles were mostly deserted, and fell an easy prey to the Norwegians. The Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, were in the language of this country, called Lochlins, but known in geography as Scandinavians. These northern tribes were but too well known through all the western coasts of Europe: they were no strangers to the inhabitants of the British isles, as pirates and invaders. Their leaders were denominated sea-kings, being as much on the water as on land, and so potent in that element as to acquire the command of the seas. They

had great facilities, from their knowledge, experience, and habits, of seizing and appropriating land and spoil. The western isles being almost desolate, they took possession of them about the end of the eighth century, and kept them during the space of three hundred years.

The western isles then underwent a revolution, in every sense of the word. The Culdees, who were zealous and active, undergoing toil and danger in other parts of the world, were not forgetful of the inhabitants of the islands, till this great event happened in the West of Scotland. But the Norwegians, a fierce and barbarous people, were more intent on spoil than attentive to the rites and ceremonies of their own religion, and entirely disregarded the Culdees, who converted the Picts, and subdued the fierce spirit of foreign nations. They, however, were left at rest in the small island Iona for some time : it lay unnoticed. The Norwegians seized all that were considerable, and had the island of Man as seat of government.

It has been alleged, and was believed, that the Druids, who were lurking in some of the isles, after they became extinct on the mainland, incited the avidity of the plunderers, and imposed on their credulity, making them believe that the community of a small isle separated from Mull by a very narrow channel, possessed great riches, which they gathered through all the British islands and laid up in Iona. The Druids were jealous of the Culdees from the beginning. They were dispossessed by them, and lost all credit by the preaching and propagating of the new religion. Impotent as they were, even among the Celts, who now acquired new appellations as well as a new religion, they could yet show that they became not entirely imbecile. They were



shrewd and penetrating : they soon understood the prevailing passion of the northern tribe. Lo ! the fatal effect of envy !

The Norwegians, glad to obtain the riches that they already saw in their grasp, went and seized on the small isle, too insignificant to have attracted their notice, were they not put on the scent. They were sadly disappointed in not finding the treasures expected, and, in their rage, wreaked their vengeance on the innocent society. The Culdees lost all they possessed, and were obliged to leave the island, A.D. 877. They fled to Ireland from the cruel invaders, carrying the relics of Columba with them. Still some of them cleaved to the hallowed abode of their predecessors, though sadly shorn of the splendour of former days. But their troubles ended not in the devastation that made so many of them leave a place that had been consecrated by the holy life and great learning of Columba. The enemy visited again the little island in 988, pillaged the dwellings, and slew the president and fifteen of his co-presbyters ; yet some of the Culdees survived and remained in the sacred spot. So attached were they to the hallowed ground, that although the edifices were again burnt in 1059, they could not think of dragging themselves from the place they venerated.

Iona continued to be inhabited by the Culdees till 1203, when Ceallach built a monastery, in opposition to the remnants of the buildings of the persecuted, so that the Culdees fell under the deep policy of the Roman clergy.

Dr D'Aubigné erroneously states that the last of the brethren of Iona became monks. " They," says he, " received the Latin tonsure." They never did, though

they lost, as has been related, their churches, seats of learning, and possessions : they persevered in spreading the glad tidings of great joy during their lives ; but they ceased to ordain presbyters, as their missionaries would not be received where the Roman clergy became dominant.

The fame of the Culdees faded away gradually, and the office was lost ; but the spirit infused into the faithful followers was not extinct, and their memory has been cherished in future generations.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## The Colleges and Learning of the Culdees.

The greatest boon the Roman emperors conferred on the nations that they subdued, was the knowledge of letters and the arts. The British isles enjoyed it in common with other countries ; and the Roman clergy had the same advantage that the ancient British clergy enjoyed. Then the question is, How were the one more distinguished by their learning and piety than the other ? The answer is short : they had the Bible, and received nothing that was not in the written Word. Was the Bible alone the source from which they derived their literary acquirements ? The Culdees made use of human means too. Columba and his brethren had the classics, which they perused. Latin was the language then most in use ; it was in general the language of the learned. Although the Romans withdrew their legions from Britain, they left the language, the learning, and the arts, in many parts of it, which the Anglo-Saxons had not been able to obliterate.

In the provinces north of the Tweed, the blighting influence of their persecuting spirit reached not. The Caledonians retained their warlike habits, and at the same time benefited by the knowledge spread among them. It was the peculiar province of the Culdees to

cherish and teach the literature of the country as a handmaid to the propagation of the gospel.

But had not others the same advantages and facilities ? They had, if they were to make the proper use of them. Luther and Piola were alike great reformers ; but we see how far they differed in their works. The one wrought in the light of revelation, the other in fancy and imagination. When men, though of high abilities, are given to credulity, and believe in miracles, they abandon reason. Revelation spreads not the light of truth where errors are admitted. But we shall not trouble the reader with the monkish legends that obtained in those times ; they cast a shade over the knowledge in which the literature of the Romans was calculated to enlighten and edify.

It seemed to have been ordained by a ruling Providence that the learning taught by the Culdees should be brought to a high degree of perfection, before ignorance and superstition had been widely spread over these lands. Patrick carried learning into Ireland, as has been observed above, and made the best use of it in the country of his adoption ; it took root and flourished in the genial soil for centuries. Many learned men arose after him, who were zealous and assiduous in the wide field of improvement. Columba again struck out a new path for himself, and, by the blessing of God, succeeded in a work that appeared hopeless to others.

These two eminent men silenced the voice of the bard, and enlightened the people that sat under the shadow of ignorance and idolatry. They had the brethren to aid them in their great labours, pious and learned men ; but they respectively opened the way to them.

The elders instructed the young. The institutions

of Iona were copies of those introduced by Patrick into the western isles, but they were enlarged and improved. They were left by Columba in a perfect state. On them their colleges and presbyteries were founded, and by them probationers were ordained.\*

We need not mention again the number of the churches and seats of learning in Ireland and Scotland. Twenty successors of Aidan and Colman were sent to South Britain, and these observed the institutions of Iona. They founded presbyteries and colleges wherever they taught, and ordained probationers to instruct the people. While the Culdees trained the youth, the British Church was in a flourishing state, and that was till the reign of Malcolm Canmore ; the churches and colleges being endowed by princes and others, who gave to the pastors land in possession. In a country thinly inhabited, when land was of little value, the teachers of the youth and the instructors of the people were not burdensome to the state, while they were reforming the rising generation, and guiding the adults in the path of their duties. They were exemplary, by their frugality, industry, and activity, to the cultivators of the soil, in making it more productive.

William the Lion endowed the Culdean seat of learning into a regular canonry in 1273. Alexander II., who died in 1248, had confirmed the possession at Abernethy. Milthiades, Countess of Angus, bestowed the whole land lying south of Monifed, or Monefeth, on the intrusive Romans, though the Culdees held it during the life of her father.

In the institution of Loch Leven, the Culdees received

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\* Ordine inusitatu, Bede.

much land from Malcolm III. and his queen, which they lost by the policy of the prelate or pope. A list of the books found in the priory of Loch Leven at the time it was given to the canons regular, 1150, show how valuable these were, as they gave a fair statement of the history of the age.

The Culdees had the institutions of Dunkeld and St Andrews. Dunkeld became the deposit of the relics of Iona after the Norwegians dispelled them from the venerated seat of learning and piety, where they were long remembered many ages after the institution had been suppressed. So great was the celebrity of the Culdees at home and abroad, that King Constantine II. took up his residence among them, and died A.D. 943, a member of their society at St Andrews, where they had considerable endowments.

Brechin was at an early age a distinguished seat of the Culdees ; but they continued much longer at Melrose. This seat of learning was destroyed by the Danes, A.D. 850.

Of the many seats of learning through the kingdom, we only mention such as have been noted in our researches, not attending so much to dates as to facts ; they have been the best known colleges, founded on the institutions of Iona.

Assailed on all sides, it was not possible that the British Church, however useful and much esteemed, could long stand. The Danes and Norwegians were not the enemies that used all their endeavours to extirpate the whole body of Christians. They left the buildings in flames to the survivors, who were allowed to return to their dilapidated houses. They had slain some and plundered all, yet the survivors still kept the pos-

session, and they were content with the small isle. Yes, the pagans allowed them to worship the True God after the manner of their fathers ; but the Roman clergy left them not a lingering ray of hope, when they substituted spacious services in place thereof, and appointed beneficed clergy, where the brethren subsisted on their own exertions.

All those who were dignified under the supremacy, received the canons of the Church of Rome. Thus the deep policy of the prelacy struck at the root. To lop off branches, or even cut down the tree, was not thought enough ; saplings might spring up and grow to maturity : it was deemed necessary to cut root and branch.

Many were the struggles the Culdees had with the Romish clergy, and long did they maintain their ground, not so much for their possession as for their spiritual privileges, and these they preserved to the last. They were observed in Kyle and Cunningham till the followers of Wickliffe appeared, "like the faint daybreak of the Reformation."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## The Three Orders of Clergy of Iona.

Before leaving this small isle of the West, a few things may be said of what made it so famous. As one of the Hebrides it is too insignificant to attract much notice. There is nothing in its natural structure, like Staffa, to bring strangers to it ; and the ruins of the sacred buildings are not to impose on the enlightened mind that looks past the erections of Ceallach to a more humble, but not less solemn remains of the places of worship of the Culdees.

We have already given the derivation of Iona ; the island is too well known to be described here ; its position and productions have nothing singular in either ; yet there is something extraordinary in its history, as it has been the residence of three orders of clergy in succession.

It might be impossible to ascertain, and it is unnecessary to inquire, what made the first order fix on the small island of Iona, as a special place of residence of the living and the dead. When the Druids were persecuted by the Romans, they removed to the north of the island of Great Britain, out of the reach of their power. But why they should fix on a bare barren island is not easily conceived ; yet certain it is, they selected it as a burying-place at an early period of time, and *clachan-*



*nan-druidhneach* is well known, and pointed out to the stranger.

Another extraordinary relic of the Druids is a large stone, flat at the top, on which were laid round stones to be turned, and as they have been often turned round, were wearing the flag below them. Tradition says that the Druids averred that when the round stones would wear through the large flag or stone beneath, the end of the world would come. The vulgar believed it, and always had so much reverence or awe of the druidical revelation of the last day, as not to remove the round stones, and for a long time turned them round. The progress made in wearing the flag must be very slow, were men to continue the practice, and to wear it through would appear endless ; still the credulous looked to the fulfilment.

*Clachan-nan-druidhean*, or stone of the last day, was an emblem to excite curiosity in the inquisitive mind ; but a curiosity that was never to be gratified. It must have been one of the mysteries of the Druids that they in this island permitted to be exhibited to ocular demonstration. It must have been out of respect to the feelings of the people that the Culdees suffered this druidical relic to stand, or they might regard it with indifference, as they could see no ill consequence of the awe it produced on the vulgar mind.

But as the Druids worshipped in the open air and in groves, it is difficult to conceive what would make them select an island on which there was no wood, as a place of residence. Oak was the favourite wood, and they had the misletoe in veneration. There is little if any wood in the islands ; but necessity might have obliged the persecuted Druids to put up with islands and remote places for concealment. They inhabited other

islands : a small adjacent island retains still their name. They must have resided some time in Iona, as they claimed it as a right, most likely in consequence of long possession. They endeavoured to impose on Columba and his friends, when they came to Iona, and to get them removed from it.

The second order of clergy in Iona were the Culdees. Columba and his friends came from Ireland to Scotland 131 years after Patrick went from Scotland to Ireland, as has been stated in the lives of those eminent men. The first operations of the brethren in Iona were on a small scale : an ordinary house would have sufficed, and a small place of worship. Oran's chapel was the first erected by Columba on the island ; but before he commenced any work, he went to the king of the Picts, and obtained leave to remain on the island, and hold it in possession. This was necessary in every way, more especially as he found the Druids making opposition to him and his friends. The Culdees were never known to take violent possession of any place. Their object was to instruct the people in the knowledge of the Word of Truth, and not to acquire wealth.

But whether Columba and his friends happened to have landed by chance in Iona, or that they were guided by a ruling Providence, it is certain that the island was regarded by them as a convenient place in the kingdom of the Picts. It was of no great value to the proprietors of land, who left larger islands, and followed their predatory practices on the mainland ; but Columba considered it sufficient for him and his brethren, and central, or more convenient, as he could take his boat and visit other islands or places in the kingdom, more easily than were he to reside in a country covered with wood, where there

were no roads, was of difficult access, and full of dangers.

The attention of the brethren, after erecting the necessary buildings, simple and rude as they must have been, was the cultivation of the land, and that, too, would have been according to their exigencies : they were alike of secondary consideration, though essential to their subsistence. Whatever art or embellishment was used in old buildings, strength was always attended to. It required no mechanics to erect what buildings were necessary in those days ; all that they wanted was what would serve the purpose.

The first order, or Druids, required no house for public worship : the circle of stones was literally called *clachan* ; the Culdees saw no reason for changing the appellation. The sacred building was of dry stone wall, covered with a roof of such materials as were found convenient, and some burial-ground was laid out in a convenient adjacent space ; and, as seen in most places, the *clachan* was erected in the centre of said area.

The first buildings in Iona were burnt by the Norwegians, as we have observed in a preceding chapter : the burial-ground remained untouched.

The third order of clergy in Iona being Romans, very different buildings were erected : these were splendid edifices, the ruins of which are admired by visitors, who may not know but they were the places of worship of the celebrated Columba and his successors. They were began by Ceallach, as we have mentioned. They sealed the doom of the poor brethren that still lingered in a place they so venerated after the devastation of the Northmen ; but henceforth it was no home to the indi-

gent, who lost all, and would not be heard by those who preferred pomp and grandeur.

The last church built in Iona was fifty-eight feet long and twenty broad. The flag or gravestone laid over the remains of the abbess is within the building. Her image or likeness, is engraven on it ; on the other end of the flag is seen the picture of the Virgin Mary, a crown on her head, and the infant Jesus in her arms ; the sun and moon above her as the queen of heaven, and at her feet written in Latin, " Holy Mary, pray for me." There is a Latin epitaph of the lady abbess, who died 1511, offering her soul to the Most High. On the outside of the church appear the gravestones of the nuns ; and the grave of a poor sister that broke her vows is seen in a corner.

The splendid cross had been erected for the chief of the Macleans on the way to the High Church. It is said that three hundred and sixty crosses were once in the island : these were the work of the idle and superstitious. They were destroyed by the order of the Synod of Argyle.

It was the last desire of kings and chieftains to have their remains conveyed to I-Colum-Kill, that their bones should moulder in the sacred earth among the holy men who rested there.

Oran's grave is a large space full of gravestones, in which have been laid the corpses of men famous in their respective countries. There were forty-eight Scottish, four Irish, eight Danish, two French kings, interred in Iona, whose names were engraved in their respective languages, on large flags or gravestones, and many chieftains besides. These engravings were not the work of the Culdees ; they have been executed un-

der the third order of clergy. Similar flags, or large unpolished oblong stones, on which are engravings of warriors clad in armour, and of saints with an open book, are found in many church-yards through the kingdom, as in Kilmichael, Kilmarlin, &c. The tradition of the counties in which they are, is, that they have been carried from Iona, but says not how they have been conveyed into those distant places. They are rude large stones taken from the adjacent quarries, where the papists built churches; and the engravings on them have been executed by the mechanics employed at the desire of priests or monks. The Culdees thought not of such pictures or drawings as are found in Iona and elsewhere.

The harbour in Iona where men landed with the remains of the dead to be interred in the holy ground, is pointed out to strangers. A little above the harbour is an old wall, called *clackan-nan-druidhean*, the stone inclosure of the Druids, where they performed their religious ceremonies. These were very simple and rude; the buildings of the Culdees were such as the missionaries were able to raise, and that were sufficient for their purpose. The papal buildings were splendid in comparison, and imposing. Were they believed by the kings and chieftains, who exacted a promise of their subjects and dependents to carry their remains to Iona, and have them interred in the sacred ground, to have been the erections of the holy men? Columba was then, and has been since called Colum-Kille, or Malcolm of the Cells, as if he had been one of the saints that erected monasteries, and that the ground in which they were so desirous to have their remains moulder, was consecrated in due form, after the rites and ceremonies of

the Church of Rome. All of the Romish persuasion thought so ; and the ideas have been carried down to our day.

When Dr Johnson walked over the graves, and surveyed the venerable ruins, his thoughts must have been on the Elders, whose labours were not commemorated by the pompous erections, or the engravings of the Virgin and abbess ; a greater work must have appeared to the eye of his mind : the conversion of a whole pagan people to Christianity, the learning and study of the Apostle of the Picts, and the light of the Word that shone amid the darkness that almost enveloped Christendom.

“ We are treading,” says he, in his *Tour to the Western Islands*, “ that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, where savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefit of knowledge and the blessing of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the distant or the future predominant over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy, as could conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warm among the ruins of Iona.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Language of the Culdees changed.

The Culdees changed not the terms used by the Druids, the ancient priests of the Celtæ. Their language being a dialect of the Celtic, which is a descriptive language, no other terms could be chosen more appropriate ; for instance, *clachan*, which was the druidical edifice for worship, and *clachan* was the proper name of the building in which the Culdees worshipped. These differed very much indeed, but no more in their appearance than in the manner in which the service was performed. The former was a circle of large stones, *clachan*; the latter, walls of stone, over which was a roof. Some writers say that the British built all their edifices with wood. That might be in general ; their dwellings were of the wood which covered the face of the country, but in Iona, Columba and his brethren built of stone ; the roof might be of wood and turf ; and, after their example, places of worship were built with the same materials. Some of them have retained the original name *clachan*. No two things, however, could differ more than the modes of worship. See the rites and ceremonies of the Druids in the Appendix.

But the Roman clergy used the Latin language in their instructions as well as writings, and denominated the places of worship *Cill*, (*c* pronounced like *k*,) *Cells* ; hence the Celtic-Latin name of churches throughout

the kingdom dedicated to certain saints. They are too numerous to be mentioned ; whereas the original name *clachan* is rare, which shows how the Church of Rome succeeded in getting the most of these countries within her pale. Seats of learning, or colleges, were called *Cathair-Chuldich*,—the seat or chair of the Culdees. These were many. Wherever was a *clachan*, there was a *cathair-chuldich*, as a parochial school is adjacent to every parish church in Scotland. But the Romans have changed the name, and the Celtic term, which is appropriate and expressive yet, is almost forgot.

The Culdee sat in his chair, and instructed the young in the use of letters, and read the Scriptures to the aged. The Roman clergy could not effect the like alterations on the institutions of Iona, by which their presbyteries were formed and their colleges founded, all which differed much from their rules : they therefore called the ordination of probationers unusual.\* It was different from the orders of the Church of Rome ; but let it be observed, that it was she that differed from the primitive Church : that her cells, monasteries, and convents were of a later date.

The language of the first Christians who came into Britain was Latin, as has been mentioned above ; but the British who received the new religion, used their own, in which they were more conversant, and so did the Culdees ; it was the language of the people, in which they were most desirous of instructing them : it is expressive, and is the best adapted for worship that is known. The language of the Druids was the vehicle of all the knowledge of their ages ; and how many these

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\* Ordine inusitata.—Bede.



were, we cannot say. It was the language of their bards, and they gave it a prestige that has continued until our day. There were different dialects of the Celtic tongue in Gaul, as we learn from Cesar's commentaries ; and, being yet a living language, as the dialects of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, are spoken with less or more difference. The Welsh and the Irish differ more than the Irish and Gaelic, as the intercourse between these nations has been greater. The Gaelic is undoubtedly the purest, though the Irish the more copious ; but in which ever of these nations the elders or Culdees taught, they spoke the language of the people. As they delivered the whole truth of revelation, and made no secret of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, the audience were intelligibly taught, and the Word was to them the power of God unto salvation.

The Romish clergy used their own tongue, not that some of them could be ignorant of the language of the people they were to instruct and to inform ; but that from a very early period they seemed not inclined to impart all knowledge to the vulgar. The Druids carefully concealed their mysteries from the people, who, in their ignorance, revered them as dignitaries. The sacerdotal bards divulged what was most useful in their time to the nation. The Romans sealed the book, by using a language unknown, and in their conversation and instruction, and words and phrases, that were foreign, unintelligible, but which the vulgar might think very learned. When we listen to a good speaker who knows no other language, we admire his pure, elegant, and intelligible expressions, and he, too, follows and understands every word of a Gaelic discourse ; whereas a person who speaks English tolerably, may not be able to understand

the half of what he hears. Of what use, then, can instruction be to an audience, when delivered in an unknown tongue ?

The changes made on the language of the ancient British clergy, contributed much to throw a shade over all the knowledge they imparted to the people. The latter soon forgot the simplicity of the elders in their mode of instruction ; and the imposing forms of the Church that was most powerful were received by them. When they frequently heard Columba, called Calum, or Malcolm of the Cells (*Kalum-Kille*), the thoughtless imagined him a monk ; and at this day he is supposed to have been a monk. How few of the visitors of Iona think of the pious, learned brethren, and their building of dry stones, while they admire the ruins of edifices erected by the third order of clergy there ! Surely kings and chieftains, who desired and required that their remains should be carried to Iona, and interred in ground they considered sacred, had higher views than the dilapidated edifices of *Ceallach*, and the sculptures presented on rude stones !

But the greatest and most fatal change made in the language of the Culdees was not external. What is visible to the organ of sense may be permanent, may be considered ; and a person of reflection and judgment may alter his opinion entertained at the first sight, or learn whether the thing seen was true or false. It is not so in the eye of the mind. A word, an expression, a phrase, may make an impression that cannot be easily erased, and produce an effect that may prove fatal. There is no doubt but many such have occurred in the change made on the ancient language in the British isles. In nothing is this so dangerous as in religion.

When the Word of God was sealed, anything might be taught to the people.

The Culdees had the greatest advantage, while they made the least pretension. They were learned, and made, as we have seen in the lives of the most eminent among them, the best use in their power of human learning ; but to revelation they looked for all that was of most importance. They depended not on human knowledge : they studied the Scriptures, of which they made no secret. They said not, You are to receive what I think proper to give ; but, You are to hear my interpretation, and may the Holy Spirit enlighten you, that you shall receive the truth as it is in Jesus.

But we say not that the change took place wholly from design or intention. The clergy who studied the learned languages, in neglect of their mother tongue, were naturally apt to use words and expressions to which they were accustomed, and write as well as speak these instead of the proper ones. An abbot, a monastery, a bishop being more familiar, as they were more in use ; in talking and writing of the more ancient, they used what had been readier, and more consonant to their thoughts : as we hear some who actually translate from one language to another in delivering a discourse. This arises from a want of energy in searching and thinking.

But we must say that bishops and inferior clergy have been intentionally the cause of changes even in sealing ordinances. They denounced the ordination of the Culdees, because the native language was used, which they declared barbarous compared to the classics, which they commended.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## Culdeecism.

The Culdees passed away after the long series of twelve centuries, having fulfilled their mission ; yet the piety and worth of the zealous elders—they assumed no higher name,—left an impression that centuries have not thrown into oblivion. As a body of Christian instructors, they were and will be remembered and venerated as long as there shall be readers of ecclesiastical history. Many eminent men among them, were a record kept of their labours, would have filled many pages of Church history. But they have all lived in their works. These were not the results of the endeavours of aspirants of fame, rank, or power. No : the Culdees were faithful servants of the meek and lowly Jesus.

The works of the Culdees may be described as external and internal. Of the first enough has been said in the history of the “ Isle of Saints ;” and Iona, which in the western isles is like a speck in the distance. The Culdees left monuments more durable than brass. These were internal, and may be summed in the term Culdeecism. When we look back to those ages of lights and shades, will we not discover the guidance of an all-ruling Providence ? We must look to agency higher and more potent than human. The Culdees were not men of wealth or influence ; they were most of them sufferers in the good cause, and it had been good for them it was

so. Where are Christians to be found so faithful and zealous as in times of persecution? The true and the pretending have been in these fiery trials made known. The Culdean Christians suffered most during the hundred and thirty years the Britons struggled unsuccessfully for liberty. The missionaries from Iona, and their adherents in South Britain, endured with patience, but with firmness, all that stronger powers could have inflicted. The numbers were not few, when so many true Christians suffered at Bangor; and what zeal and attachment the remnant of the brethren of Iona evinced, when they lingered about the smoking ruins of the buildings that were consecrated by the services of the brethren!

The works of the Culdees apparent to the visual organ were, under all circumstances, great in Ireland and Scotland, as their *clachans* and *cathair-chuldich* proved; but the instructions imparted to young and old, were impressions not received through the organs of sense; they were the light of the Word and the Spirit, that all believers receive when the knowledge imparted to them is from the Word of Truth. The external monuments are liable to many accidents of time and chance. Whether good or bad, they are not to be everlasting. It is otherwise with the work of the Spirit in the inward man. As all is perfect that God ordains, the doctrine of the everlasting gospel, pure and uncontaminated, is a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It may be unknown to the man of the world, as it is not visible to the sensual organ, but it is seen and experienced by the godly in all ages of the world.

The offers of dignities made by the Roman clergy,

proved more detrimental to the Culdees than the bloody persecutions of former times. Many followed the example of Adamnan : they were not stedfast, nor imbued by the Spirit. The faithful continued their labours, though in obscurity, after their places of worship had been appropriated by the votaries of Rome. The Culdees were ousted, we may say, from their possessions, as well as from their places of worship and instruction ; but what tended to make the name little known and insignificant, were the terms in common use in the wide-spreading Church, and liberally bestowed on the Culdees, as well as on their own monks. It was an honour that the humble, unassuming, godly Culdees neither desired, nor would have accepted ; yet, strange as it may appear, had been entailed on them. They survived all attempts made upon them by the uncompromising idolator and the insidious foe ; but all died in the course of time, and the field of battle was left in the possession of the victorious.

This was a new era in the British Church. The prevailing religion was spread through the land : it was alone apparent in all places. A Culdee, as long as any remained, might lament, like the prophet who witnessed the idolatry of the people, but to whom the Lord told that he had seven thousand in Israel, who bended not the knee to Baal. There were many in the kingdom who, in silence, worshipped the true God, and rejected the honours and dignities that the Romish clergy had in their power to confer, and despised all imposing rites and ceremonies, so vainly displayed to the senses, but which could not reach their hearts.

While the Roman pontiff was extending his sway

above prince and people in every country, a higher Power, invisible to the world, was bringing about, in his wise administration of the universe, His own good purposes, which was in part made known in Christendom by the Reformation. Scotland shared in the events which took place. The light of the Word spread by the faithful instructors, was like the rays of the evening sun, that are seen rising higher on distant eminences as the globe of light descends into the ocean. Men in lower situations see not these, while the shades of night are gathering round them, as in the twilight. The votaries of Rome, were they to perceive Culdeeism, would despise it. It was a subtle substance which their sensual organ received not ; and if it should, what impression could it make on a mind that was alien to the light ? The Culdees departed ; their places of worship and instruction were in *their* hands, and they occupied the lands which they held by possession. All seemed now as a phantom, that appeared and passed away. It was not so to the more discerning in after times. The religion of Jesus Christ, taught and expounded by his faithful servants, made a deeper and more lasting impression on believers than all external pageantry could ever effect. It could not be effaced, nor could the instructions of the venerable elders be forgot through ages.

The sincere worshippers of the living God adored him in silence and solitude. Many continued in the faith through the persecuted kingdom of the South. Their numbers were not few, as may be inferred from the massacre of Bangor. They who cherished Culdeeism in Scotland were unknown till the Reformation, before which period the Culdees shared the low opinion formed

of the vulgar, who were to know no more than their priests thought proper to have made known to them.

“It is a curious fact in history,” says a certain divine in his discourse, “though not so generally known as it deserves, that a large body of pastors and people in the isles and mountains of Scotland, like the Waldenses among the Alps, maintained the worship of God in its simplicity, and the gospel in its purity, for many generations, when it was greatly corrupted in other places. In the early ages of the Christian Church, in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were seats of learning and religion. I-Colum-Kill was the seat of learning in all branches of knowledge. In England many of them with great zeal taught and propagated religion out of the prophets and apostolic writers.”\*

Another says in his sermon, “In some of the islands which we are apt to consider as the seat of ignorance and barbarism, lived a people remarkable for simplicity of manners, purity of behaviour, and unaffected piety; and these were the little leaven that leavened the whole lump. Of their number were Columba and his brethren. Even in the tenth age (century), when the darkness of corruption and error had grossly increased, we are told there were some godly men in Scotland, who taught the true doctrine of Christ’s atonement, and continued to receive their functions apart, without acknowledging the authority of those who assumed authority over God’s inheritance.”†

The preacher must have been impartially informed. The Culdees continued their instructions, as we have

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\* Dr Cumming.

† Bonar’s Sermon.



seen, during three subsequent centuries ; and, after they disappeared, their works followed, and were, though less known, standing till the time of the Reformation, when Culdeeism underwent a change, not in doctrine, but in name.

“The Culdees, whose history is so obscure, had in Abernethy a university and a collegiate church, which is known to have subsisted towards the end of the thirteenth century.”\*

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\* Edinburgh Encyclopædia, vol. 1.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## Effects of Papacy.

It seemed to be the will of God, in his good Providence, that the light which shone so bright on these isles should be withdrawn for a season, but not extinguished. The pope having obtained the supremacy, would have all people brought within the pale of his Church. Though the Culdees themselves died away, and the Romish clergy occupied the ground they possessed, the light of the Word, which they industriously spread, was guiding the followers of their late faithful pastors ;—the vital spark that, cherished by the true believers, soon rose, and burst forth in the Reformation.

The divines, from whose sermons we have taken the above quotations, seemed surprized to find the inhabitants of the islands and mountains of Scotland so pious and well informed in former times. They no doubt expected nothing but ignorance and barbarism among people who lived in remote places ; and no wonder, as they were regarded, during many ages, as little civilized, and very impartially taught in the knowledge of the gospel. This may require some explanation.

When papacy became the religion of the people, it extended to the remotest corners of mainland and isles. The clergy, or monks, were more desirous of promulgat-

ing the new tenets of their Church than the doctrine of the gospel ; in fact, the Scriptures were almost unknown, especially the New Testament, a copy of which Luther found in a corner of his monastery, covered with cobwebs. Many votaries of the Church of Rome might never have seen a copy of the Scriptures in the isles and highlands of the West.

These parts which continued longest to enjoy the light of the Word, remained proportionally long in the darkness of the ages that succeeded the period of time in which the Culdees laboured. The dark ages reached them, and the night of their spiritual season was long. When the Reformation began in Scotland, the dawn arose on the mainland and the South ; the light that was still cherished in the isles and mountains, becoming less and more dim in every age, as the shades were falling darker, being attracted by a greater. The true knowledge was lost, and the reign of novel rites, foreign dogmas, and much pageantry, took the place of the simple forms of the Church government of the ancient British Church.

The Scotch highlanders always maintained their military spirit, though in times later than we are considering, they had fallen low in the opinion formed of them, before changes took place in the government of the kingdom, and the policy of the ruling powers ; and they suffered no less in spiritual matters. The measures followed in times of trouble and disturbances should not be attributed to people themselves. Chieftains and others were followed by their clans, who had been true and faithful to the allegiance they acknowledged. And they were found loyal and trustworthy when enrolled in the lines of the settled and established government. But they suffered much and long when learning and re-

ligious knowledge were spreading through the land that was accessible to reformers. From the history of the Culdees, we learn that mountains and islands are not inaccessible to the introduction of piety and learning. The true cause, therefore, of the darkness and ignorance of the people in these parts must be charged to the system of the clergy, who were not so ably opposed by the Reformers as in other parts of the kingdom. The consequence was, that the natives, whose manners were rough and uncultivated, fell behind their contemporaries in civilization, and were accounted superstitious and ignorant.



# APPENDIX.



## A P P E N D I X.

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### THE DRUIDS.

As we have made mention of the Druids in the course of this history, it will not be thought impertinent to give a brief account of them here.

The Celtæ, a great nation, the first who came from the East to the Western world, appeared at the dawn of history on the west confines of Europe ; they were the first that peopled this quarter of the globe : they have been distinguished by their language, religion, and laws. The Druids were the first order among them ; the nobles constituted the second order, as Julius Cesar informs us. The Druids presided over all sacred rites. Dr Murray says, they were a regularly well instituted priesthood before Cesar's time. They had reduced the Celtic religion into a system, and taught the people their descent from Dis or Dits, the god of night ; they therefore reckoned from night rather than day.

The Celtæ carried their religion from the East, and



had their priests, the Druids, since they separated from the parent stock, and like other nations, since they lost their knowledge of the living God. The constitution of this great nation seems to have been appointed by Providence to people the earth. They were constituted in septs, or small bodies, that could easily separate and spread abroad, and, at the same time, were united by their language and manners. The Druids were their legislators and philosophers, and instructors of the youth.

The first and chief function the Druids discharged was their religion, which they divided into the mysteries and the popular. The former they deemed so solemn, that they were not to be divulged to the people, who regarded their priests as superior beings, and dared not to pry into their secrets: they regarded them with awe and veneration.

The Druids admitted the creation of matter. They were men of exalted genius: they raised their minds to the highest contemplations and sublimest inquiries, despising worldly matters as beneath their consideration. They asserted the immortality of the soul. This part of their doctrine they publicly taught, that they might inspire the people with contempt of death. They saw how necessary it was to attach rewards and punishment to this part of their creed. They had their heaven, or noble isle, into which none could expect to have access that wanted magnanimity, and other heroic qualities: they likewise inculcated excellent rules. As a necessary consequence of their belief, they taught good morals, and gave salutary precepts, always setting good examples before the people, such as were well calculated to produce good effect on their disposition and behaviour, making them hospitable and charitable.

The Druids were the philosophers of the Celtæ : they engrossed all the knowledge of the past and present, and were adding their own observation and experience. They made progress in the sciences, especially geometry and astronomy. Natural philosophy, arithmetic, and botany, were studied, in which they made considerable progress. To the study of rhetoric they paid great attention ; and to the charms of their eloquence much of the admiration and power they enjoyed might be ascribed.

The primitive ideas of the Druids concerning their divinity, were similar to what the Brahmins entertained, namely, "that God is the soul that animates the whole body of nature." But in their researches they differed from the opinions of the Brahmins, who supposed the souls of men to be a portion of that irresistible principle which pervades and moves the whole body of the universe.

The Druids placed in the human frame a distinct intelligence, susceptible of happiness, and subject to misery; while they entertained a notion of divinity that gave life and motion to all nature. They likewise believed in an evil spirit, that they named the Destroyer ; and they taught the doctrine of rewards and punishment.

The Druids taught astrology, and were not strangers to the art of magic. They pretended to be conversant in omens, and to have futurity revealed to them. The superstitious were made to believe that they had power over the elements. But it was their usefulness in the state, their retired habits, severe studies, and great progress in all branches of learning, that acquired to them the highest honours, and obtained for them the greatest immunities. They were obeyed as supreme judges. They were exempted from public services in war and

peace ; nor were they charged with any of the public burdens, while they enjoyed the highest privileges : they had their time at their own disposal.

Although Cesar met not with the Druids in Gaul or Britain, he made minute inquiries into their knowledge, which, he says, was profound. They taught of the stars and their motion, the magnitude of countries, the nature of things, and the power of the gods.

The Druids were also the legislators of the Celtæ. Possessing all the knowledge of the times, and being well acquainted with human affairs, they were the proper persons to make laws, and also to execute them. They possessed unlimited power in peace and war. The nobles being second to them in rank and dignity, they abided by their decisions : the chief power being lodged in their hands, they punished the guilty as they thought proper. Their power extended to the community at large : they declared war and peace at their option. They settled disputes, and regulated the affairs of private persons, as well as of the state. They deposed magistrates, and even kings, if their actions deviated from the laws. They had the privilege of naming the magistrates that presided over cities, and the kings were elected by their approbation.

The Druids had the charge of the education of the youth, while they formed the morals of adults : they were rigorous and severe. The youth who were initiated into their mysteries were enjoined the greatest secrecy. It was unlawful to commit these to writing. All the learning they imparted was committed to memory : this faculty was so highly exercised as to perform what was almost incredible. Instructions were delivered in verse to facilitate the labours of learning : they committed

fifty thousand verses to memory. The young students were called *Eubages*, (children :) their curriculum was long, extending to fifteen, and even twenty years. Maxims, precepts, and doctrines, were laid up in the storehouse Memory.

From the Druids proceeded all the knowledge they thought proper to dispense. There was a religion for the vulgar ; and another, studied in their colleges, to which the youth of rank were admitted, and in which they were instructed during their long novitiate.

Though the Druids made it unlawful to commit their secrets to writing, they were not ignorant of letters. While they kept their mysteries concealed, they committed the laws and moral precepts to writing. Their pupils trusted to memory alone, and the people held in veneration that of which they were ignorant. The letters of their alphabet were seventeen, and *h* aspirate. The Greeks borrowed these, to which they added a few more, to render their alphabet complete. Whether the Druids had written their mysteries is not known. The writings which had fallen into the hands of Patrick and Columba might have been concerning astrology and magic, and being of a pernicious tendency, were perhaps destroyed by them.

It is not improbable that it was from the Druids that Pythagoras had borrowed his doctrine of Metempsychosis, or migration of souls. Some writers allege, we know not on what authority, that it was no part of their creed. This has been disputed ; but it is certain that the Druids believed not in the absurdity of migration of the human soul into brutes.

We shall take a short view of the public worship and sacrifices of the Druids. They had an Arch-Druid,

named *Coivi*: he presided over the priests in their religious ceremonies, and was head of the college of learning. The god *Dis*, or *Dits*, was called in their language *Be'il*, composed of two terms that signifies the giver of life to all beings and things, animate and inanimate. The Druids looked up to some of his works with reverence; and such was their veneration for all that was great in nature, that they thought them residences of intelligencies subordinate to their god. The Celts presumed not to represent their deity by human form, but typified him by objects. They were skilled in augury, which they learned from the Druids, whose system is the oldest that is known.

The Druids used many ceremonies in their public worship, which they always performed in the open air. They had no idea of personality of deity. They formed a circle of large stones, round which they walked in the direction of the sun, to which they assigned great importance: they called this motion *deas-iul*, direct course, a term still known in the language of the Gael. Though the original signification is lost, or only known to the antiquarian, yet is it considered so important when going on a journey that they generally observe it; and the opposite, *tuath-iul*, unlucky. The Druids had a large stone within the circle, the *crom-leac*, or altar, so called from the bending posture of the priest over it. The Druids were distinguished by their dress, which was peculiar: they generally appeared in a tunic, which descended a little below the knee. They worshipped in groves, and held the mistletoe in veneration. Hence fanciful writers have derived the name from oak, which is *δρῦς* in Greek, and finding a word similar in sound in the Celtic language, though not in sense, *druis* being

(*brier*) they concluded that *druid* meant oak or misletoe ; same time they forgot that the Greek language was not in existence when the Celtæ had their priests the Druids. There is a verb in the Celtic or Gaelic language, *druidh*, to make an impression ; hence *druidhean*, wise men ; and the translators of the Scriptures into the Gaelic language, call the wise men from the East, *druidhean*, druids. The appellation of their place of worship being literally stones, was too obvious to be far fetched. The Culdees called their place of worship *clachan*, though very different as to site and construction. They had not chosen a grove, but a village surrounded it, and there was a school attached, that the young as well as the old should be instructed.

As the influence of the Druids was universal, their authority was absolute. Owing to their sanctity, their character was held sacred. He must have been a very bold man, as also a hardened sinner, that would set the mandates of the Druids at defiance. Whoever, in any rank or condition, would not submit to their decree, was interdicted by them, and the punishment was most severe. The interdicted was put in the number of the impious and wicked. He was shunned by his neighbours. All avoided his conversation as believed to be infectious : he was excommunicated and outlawed.

But what was appalling in their worship was human sacrifice. They immolated human victims : these were persons infected with incurable diseases ; or persons condemned to suffer death for their crimes ; or captives taken from the enemy ; or individuals, owing to some misfortune, that vowed they would sacrifice themselves ; but, failing of all these, the innocent were made the victims. The Druids believed that the wrath of their

deity could not be appeased, in certain cases, but by offering human beings. To the list of individuals doomed to suffer, they added those that were taken in the act of stealing, and other crimes which were deemed worthy of severe punishment, though by their laws they were not condemned to death. Other nations resorted to similar practices, that were not only most abhorrent, but destitute of the sense they ought to entertain of Deity, making them resemble demons.

The Druids observed holidays, the ceremonies of which have been preserved, while the purport and meaning of them are little known. A few of these may be mentioned ; as *Beltane*, which means reviving nature, or life coming into natural objects ; fire was kindled on every eminence, to welcome the god of heat, or warmth-giving life. *Samhuinn*, the holy fire ; when, on the eve of Hallowmas, each family in the country were obliged to extinguish their fires, and apply to the Druids for a burning coal, or consecrated fire ; but the culprits, or guilty persons in the nation during the past year, were refused, until they submitted to the rules, and performed the ceremonies or penance ordained by the Druids ; and, should they not obey, they would not receive their blessing, which was thought worse than death.

Many yet use the *deas-iul*, and endeavour to avoid the *tuath-iul*, as unpropitious, and often disastrous, not alone when going on journeys, but in their ordinary ways and transactions. Rites and ceremonies, of little moment, and ill understood, though known and practised, as they are interwoven in the language, need not be noticed.

Druidism was interwoven in all the departments of

the state, sacred and civil. It was the chief engine that moved the machinery of government. So mighty was its power, that no obstacle whatever, as far as seen of men, could obstruct it. The scattered tribes through all the countries of Europe were united and acted by it as much as they would have done were they to have continued a compact body. In religion, laws, and language, they were part and parcel of the one great nation, the Celtæ.

*Note.*—As some persons were clearing and trenching a piece of waste ground for a garden at Tynrich, a small druidical circle, close upon the highway, was disclosed to the gaze of the stranger, by the removal of masses of broom and bramble that had hitherto concealed it. This olden temple,—if temple it were, is about 18 feet in diameter, and quite entire, each of its huge stones standing erect and in its proper place; but there is an additional interest attached to it from the fact, that, while digging and levelling the interior, four huge urns, about two feet in height and one foot in diameter at the mouth, were exhumed, quite full of calcined bones, besides three or four stone coffins, formed of thin, unshapen slabs, evidently from the adjacent ground, and also containing the mortal remains of the ancient Caledonians of a pre-historic period. Unfortunately, either from the extreme brittleness of the urns, or want of care on the part of the labourers, the whole were broken to pieces, but enough still remained to show that they were of the very coarsest manufacture, in shape remote from classical, and with no pretension to decoration, but a profusion of scratchings without method, on the outside of the upper portion of each. The coffins were equally unceremoniously dealt with, but it is worthy of remark that they lay in no particular order in reference to the compass, but, if anything, rather inclined to south and north; indeed, one of them lay exactly in that direction. The general notion is, that druidical circles were temples, and nothing else, but the trenching of this one shows that they were also used as burying-places, like churches in present times, for great men, probably the higher orders of the priesthood.—*Perthshire Advertiser*, 1855.



## THE SARMATÆ, OR TEUTONS,\*

Were the next great migration from the East. They appeared at first in the North of Europe, and spread themselves widely over the Western world. The country of Sarmatia was extensive : the European division was bounded by the ocean on the North, Germany and the Vistula on the West, Saggæ on the South, and Tanais on the East. The Sarmatians have been frequently confounded with the Scythians. They were a savage nation ; naturally warlike, they painted their bodies to make them appear more terrific in battle. They met the Celtæ on the confines of Germany, which then included the whole of Sweden and Denmark, with many other districts. They increased, gained territories, and widely spread, became very powerful. They disturbed the peace of nations by their incursions. They roamed over mountains without habitation, having joined the savage hordes of Scythia, under the barbarous names of Huns, Vandals, Goths, and Alans. The race that reached the western isles was of the Goths. Their propensity to plunder carried them hither ; they were not content with the islands. They landed on the north and west coast of Albin : in the absence of the natives, they took possession of vacant lands, from which they could not be dislodged.

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\* Dr Murray ; James Macpherson, Esq.

## THE BRITONS

Came from Gaul, now France. The Gauls were a powerful branch of the Celtæ. Perceiving, as they landed, the country to be higher than that which they left, they called it *Braightuinn*, above the waves, contracted *Breatan* ; and *Breatanich*, Britons ; the British islands, Great Britain and Ireland. Julius Cesar, in his First Book of Commentaries, divides Gaul into three parts, differing in language, laws, and manners ; but in his Sixth Book he corrects this mistake, on being better informed ; he says they spoke different dialects of the same language. The Gauls who first came into South Britain, acquired an accidental appellation, as has been explained above. There were colonies from Gaul at different and distant times. As the first removed the farthest inland, they lost the knowledge of their ancestors, and supposed themselves the Aborigines of the land they inhabited. Those next the coast, and of later arrival, held intercourse with their parent people. As Cesar found they went to assist the *Venati*, he made it a pretext of coming to Britain to chastise them.

Julius Cesar wanted to add Britain to his conquest of Gaul, as it was the aim of the emperors to enlarge their great empire. He, however, found that the Britons were not to be so easily chastised. B.C. 55, they met

him as he landed ; when routed, they returned in greater numbers. They were not such people as he expected to find in the island. They fought in chariots ; and were far removed from barbarians, as he and Tacitus describe them. The Greeks and Romans called all other nations barbarians, as being not so civilized as themselves ; but the signification of the term is also applied to foreigners.

Julius Cesar, returning to winter quarters into Gaul, returned the following year, 54 B.C. with a superior force, to conquer the Britons. But Tacitus says that Cesar discovered this kingdom, but did not subdue it.

The British leaders at first gained some victories over the Roman cohorts, but military discipline was sure to prevail. " The various tribes," says Gibbon, " possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. The fortitude of Caractacus, the despair of Boadicea, and the fanaticism of the Druids, could not resist the steady progress of the imperial guards, nor avert the slavery of their country." It was not till after a war of forty years, that the greatest part of Britain submitted to the Romans.

The moral character of the Britons, according to Cesar, must have been loose. Tacitus does not countenance this report of Cesar ; Gibbon repels the charge with forcible arguments ; and other writers bear testimony to the chastity and humanity of the Britons, who had the highest respect for their wives. As many families lived under the same roof, in separate apartments, Cesar, regarding the external building, thought they lived promiscuously.

The Britons made a struggle to maintain their independence ; and, till deprived of their priests, they could not be subdued. This part of the history is so well

known as to require no recapitulation. But one instance may be given of their resistance. A Roman governor made war on the inlanders, under Caractacus : this brave leader transferred the war to the mountains of Wales, had built a strong rampart on a hill, commanded by a river dangerous to be forded, where he waited the attack of the Romans. A battle ensued. Before the engagement, his followers made oath that they would conquer or die ; but they could not prevail against the Roman arms and discipline. Caractacus lost the battle, fled to Carismandua, a queen of the Bregantes, who betrayed him, A.D. 51. He was sent in chains to Rome to grace the triumph of the conqueror. Who would not admire the calm expression of the hero, on seeing the wealth of the Romans ? “ Alas ! how is it possible that a nation possessed of such magnificence at home, could think of envying Caractacus an humble cottage in Britain ! ” The fame of this prince and leader, who, during nine years resisted the Roman arms, was spread through all Italy. The emperor being desirous of seeing him, the captive monarch appeared undaunted before his throne, and addressed him with so much dignity, as to have made the emperor order his chains to be struck off, and treated him and his family with the respect due to the brave man.

## THE SCOTS AND PICTS.

The Romans called them Caledonii, and their country Caledonia, as they appeared to them as one people. They fought a great battle at the foot of the Grampians, under the celebrated Galgæus, who was a Gael, so that authors have represented them as one nation ; whereas, were they to attend to their origin, or even to their distinctive names, they would be convinced that they were two different races.

The Romans hearing them called *Gauil-daoine*, Gaelic men, (*c* and *g* being mutable letters,) they denominated them Caledonii. These were the original possessors of the land : they were a colony from Gaul, that retained the name of the country they left, Gauls, (*Gauil*,) which • has been contracted Gael. Posterior to the period in which they came to North Britain, another colony appeared in the western islands. They were a different race, unknown to the Gael, and they called them *Gail*, strangers, which evidently shows that they were long in the country they denominated Albin, before the Gothic race appeared. Seeing the mountains of the North, the highest in the island, they called it Albin, which signified in their language *very high*, as the Celts were accustomed to name the highest parts of other countries, as the Alps. The Greeks adopted the name for the whole island, which is the largest in Europe, changing

Albin into the form of their own language, viz., Al-bion.

Hubba was the leader of the Gothic race. In honour of him, the western isles were denominated Hubbadæ, pronounced Hebudæ, and corrupted into Hebrides. The natives would have driven the strangers from the land; the latter resisted. Hence commenced conflicts and strife, which, a few intervals excepted, lasted till the final ruin of the Gothic race.

The Gael called the Gaill, *Piocaich*, plunderers; and these, in return, called them *Scuit* or *Scoitich*, wanderers, which opprobrious terms were afterwards applied to either people, viz. Scots and Picts.

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NOTE.—In the tradition of the country, the Gaill possessed the principal islands; *Ceithereileananfichead Innse-gaill*.\* Mull was said to be the most southern. In the lapse of time, a mistake occurred in the tradition of the country. The senachies were more accurate than to commit a glaring error; but others, who repeated their stories, substituted the Norwegians, (who took possession of the western islands between the eighth and ninth centuries,) in place of the Goths. The Lochlins, whether Danes, Swedes, or Norwegians, were no strangers in this country: they visited it too often to be unknown; and they seized on all the western isles. They made the Isle of Man their seat of government.

We need not be surprized at story-tellers committing such errors, but wonder that Dr John Macpherson, an

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\* The twenty-four islands of the Gaill, or strangers.

eminent Gaelic scholar, should have adopted the error into his Critical Dissertations, and that as an antiquarian he had not investigated the subject. The two people continued their hostilities, excepting when they joined their forces against their common enemy, the Romans, and again united and made incursions into South Britain, till the final overthrow of the Picts by Kenneth, the son of Alpin, and king of the Scots.

Pictland and Scotia were their kingdoms : it is not easy to draw a line of demarcation between them. The Picts chiefly lived on the north and west coast.

It is not a little surprizing to find writers differ about these nations. The two Macphersons allege they were one people, differently denominated. Pinkerton differs from both ; but he is an author of no authority. Many proofs might be adduced to show how they differed in language, in religion, and in manners. The Scots often visited their friends, the Irish : they were there known as Scots, and their country Scotia ; hence the supposition that the name was from Ireland. After the downfall of the Picts, the whole country was denominated Scotland.

## THE BARDS.

The youth, when they entered the college of the Druids, were the Eubages, and as they were advanced in learning, and gave indication of possessing poetical powers, they were employed in reducing the teaching of the Druids into verse, and when they finished their *curriculum*, they were licensed to the office of bardship. The Druids alone were their superiors.

The name *bard*, signifies singer, as they sung their compositions ; but the term always implied a shrewdness of manners and sharp intellect. As all the novitiates were sworn to secrecy, the bards were not allowed to reveal the mysteries of the Druidical religion. They, however, were not to make a secret of the doctrines which the Druids taught to the people, namely, the immortality of the soul, a future state of rewards and punishments, which they used as sublime machinery in their poems, and morals, which they inculcated in their didactic pieces.

As they were the noble youth that chiefly studied in the colleges, many of them, as might have been expected, were in the bardic class, and hence were chiefs and heroes in battle, pouring out the spirit-stirring strains, that roused and inspired the army, and raised them to the performance of actions that were thought above human power. These strains were the divinities that ren-



dered the brave superhuman. The Celts knew nothing of the divinities of other pagans, that protected, assisted, and saved their favourites in the fight. All their dependence was on the magnanimity and prowess of their heroes.

The noble isle, or island of heroes, was distant beyond the seas, where youth and happiness were always enjoyed by those who entered it. It was most difficult of access, and none could hope to arrive there, except they proved themselves in this world worthy of the applause of the man of song, whose recommendation all were most anxious to merit. The high opinion entertained of the bard exalted him not a little in the estimation of the people.

If not chiefs nor nobles, they were fighting men as well as bards in the army ; and at the feast were honoured with a seat next to the king, chief, or leader. The *senachie* was a most useful character, as historian and genealogist ; but the bard was the most popular character in the nation. In peace as well as war, he afforded to all the greatest delight. His verses melted the soul of the young ; and made the aged look back on the days of youth, with a fondness that made them fancy the scenes of joy were renewed, and imagine they saw pleasures now passed away never to return. The tale of love or the dirge, elevated the mind or depressed the spirit, as the vicissitudes of worldly affairs or mental anguish affected them.

Their proficiency in rhetoric gave the bards the ascendancy at all meetings. As the memory of the brave was embalmed in the immortal song, the finest feelings and best qualities were awakened and inculcated in their melodies, while the stubborn breast was moved and sub-

duced by the sympathy of distress. But woe be to him who offered insult to the son of song ! he would be handed down to future ages with all his real or imagined faults. The bards formed the moral character of the people. They elevated the mind by sentiments of benevolence, love, and generosity. But it was the immortality of the soul, which the Druids publicly taught, that raised the loftiest strains of the bards in all seasons ; their grand description of the noble island, into which the shades of mighty men soared and entered, to enjoy perpetual youth, and follow the pursuits in which they delighted in this world, characterized their poetry.\*

\* Macpherson and Turence.

## KENTIGERN, OR ST MUNGO.

The legend of St Kentigern, by a Roman-catholic author who wrote in 1668, insinuates that St Kentigern had at his last moments warned his disciples firmly to obey the decrees of the Fathers, and the constitution of the holy Catholic Church ; or, in other words, affirmed that St Kentigern had been a member of the Church of Rome.

Dr Jamieson says, " that Kentigern, or St Mungo, who has been viewed as the founder of the See of Glasgow, might with propriety, be numbered among those who adorned the name of Culdee, as for many years he was the disciple of St Servan at Culross. The famous Baldrid at Baltheva, was the disciple of Kentigern. The doctrine of the Culdees, as far as we may judge from Columba, was comparatively pure. As he was himself much given to the study of the Scriptures, he taught his disciples to confirm their doctrine by testimonies brought from the unpolluted fountain, and declared that to be the Divine counsel which he found there."

In writing the life of Colomba, we have rejected his supposed visit to, and meeting with St Kentigern at Glasgow, as well as many other things said of him that savoured of the marvellous or monkish legends. It is not a little amusing to read the description given by a late

writer, of Columba and his friends leaving Ireland, coming to the sea-shore, cutting down wattlings of willow, and framing a frail bark, in which they were conveyed to one of the Hebridean isles. If the writer of the Reformation had been writing a fairy tale, it would do very well ; but had he not known that the *curroch*, or boat of wattlings, covered with hides, had a suitable timber keel and ribs, and that the one in which Columba and his friends were conveyed to the west of Scotland was a large one? or that the navigation of the Mull of Cantire, and other points, currents, and dangerous straits in the West, would require a strong and good boat, and that Columba's was one of the best? It has imposed a lasting name on the landing-place in Iona : at this day the place of landing is called *Port-na-Curraich*.

We have seen a small *curroch*, fitted to convey a few persons across a strait or river ; but the large ones were used in open and dangerous seas, and they were capable of conveying many persons, even troops.

To the northern tribes who navigated the stormy seas, and lived a part of their time on the water as well as on land, the British were indebted for the art of shipbuilding. It was the only benefit they conferred on them, while they inflicted the miseries of war and the waste of devastation, carrying away all the plunder they found or could have gathered among the lands they visited in their predatory excursions.

## VISANDI DECEPTIO.

The organ of sight, the noblest of the senses, is liable to impose on persons at a distance, especially in the twilight. The Druids in their decline performed the rites and ceremonies of their religion in the twilight and in moonlight, and gave rise to a superstition that has prevailed in the north of the island, of which they were not conscious. As they went thrice round their circle of stones, spectators at a distance counted the same persons again and again, so that the total, increased by inaccurate calculation, became a great number ; and in the distance at night they appeared of diminutive size. As they performed their religious ceremonies in the neighbourhood of groves, they were thought to be arrayed in the colour of the green-leaved oak. In short, they were believed to be fairies. The credulous, women and children especially, stood in awe of them. Though these light-bodied beings were generally benevolent, yet they were not entirely free of malevolent passions and evil actions ; on certain occasions they were mischievous. They carried away women in childbed, and kept them as wet nurses, after which they found some servile employment for them : they seldom permitted their return to their homes and families, although it has been averred that some have been brought back by the use of certain spells.

Seeing the Druids active in their motion, fancy represented them dancing about, an exercise of which the fairies are said to be very fond. Their habitations were in green mounds or eminences, and they always selected very pleasant sites, many of which still bear their name. There are *Strontians* in many districts and places of the kingdom. The belief in fairies has continued to our day. We might tell many extraordinary actions of them, but we are only relating their origin, and the source from which it arose.

## LITERATURE.

Writers who deny the Highlanders any literature, say there was some learning in Iona, brought from Ireland ; that they were Irish missionaries who taught there. Granted ; but from whence received the Irish their learning ? Was it not from Scotland ? Was it not Patrick that transferred the form of church government from his native province, where village rose, and learning and the arts flourished ? In every Roman province, these were received in exchange for their liberty, after the legions had conquered the inhabitants.

But the said writers omitted a fact that should be recorded, viz. that Columba and his brethren from Ireland came to the west of Scotland and the islands, which were then in possession of the Picts, a Gothic race, who were idolators, and converted them into Christians ; and others came across to preach the gospel in other parts of Pictland, as Kiaran to Campbelton in Cantire.

Patrick planted many churches in Ireland, as has been mentioned in the History ; but he first taught the Irish the use of letters. He made them learned as well as pious. He was, under Divine Providence, instrumental in making Ireland, as she has been styled, the Mother of Saints. He wrought not such great works in the island by preternatural agency, as has been told in monkish legends. The Culdees never pretended to have

possessed the power of working miracles ; but, during a great portion of Patrick's life, he was active and laborious, and the work prospered in his hands, and many shoots sprang up from the stock that took deep root in the soil.

Columba has been the most renowned of the holy men who succeeded Patrick. After converting the Picts, he visited the Scots, and superintended their churches throughout the kingdom. He improved the forms of church government and system of learning established in his native country, and hence the institutions of Iona, on which has been formed the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.



## RELICS OF POPERY.

In the year 1790, the writer was present, and well remembers it, where a charm was wrought for the cure of an animal. His father had a fine young mare that suddenly fell sick, and stretched herself on a plain. It was said that a certain cattle-dealer, in passing that day, had looked at her, and that his evil eye struck her, or caused her illness. It was recommended to send to an old woman in the neighbourhood for a charm which would cure man or beast.

An express was sent with a little tallow, or fat of a sheep, which she baked in the palms of her hands, and, as she turned it round, she spat upon it, repeating words that none present understood; the words were well remembered, and which was no more nor less than the *Paternoster*, as the writer, when learning Latin, discovered. Why she spat on the ball of fat he could never fathom; but being present, in the year 1820, where a priest baptized a child, he particularly noticed that he spat on some ointment with which he touched the forehead of the infant.

The charm was applied to the apparent dying mare; in other words, the ball of fat was thrust down her throat. She recovered, and no one doubted the virtue of the spell.

The old woman was illiterate ; she no more understood the words she repeated than the young spectators, on whose mind the working of the charm had made an indelible impression. She was a Protestant, too. No papist had resided in her country since the Reformation. How she obtained the gift no one could tell ; it died with her, as she kept it a profound secret.

We have only to add, that she repeated every word of the *Paternoster* correctly, although she knew no other word of Latin more than of Greek.

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Some men removing a *cairn*, or large heap of stones, in 1816, on the farm of Toreblaren, Argyleshire, found a crucifix, a golden chain, and a phial, containing a pale liquid, whether wine or consecrated water was not known. The men thought little of the precious relics, and gave them to Miss M. C——, who rubbed and brushed the metal, and found that the chain was pure gold. She wore it round her neck, not a little proud of the golden treasure.

Several persons who saw the relics gave their own opinions of them, and these were various. An antiquarian happened to be a visitor of ——, the principal man of the country, who came along with him to see the place from whence the *cairn* was removed. The learned man at once pronounced it to have been a monastery, thrown down by the Reformers, and reduced into a heap of stones. The precious relics must have been buried in the *cairn* for centuries. The parish, more than any other in the country, still retain some remains of the Romish persuasion.

The gentlemen then visited the possessor of the precious relics, which they much admired. The antiquarian wished to have them some time under his inspection ; the gentleman who accompanied him pledged his word to Miss C—— that they would be safely returned to her. She never saw them again, and says “it was very shabby of Mr M‘N——.”

## ETYMOLOGY OF PROPER NAMES.

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*Alba, Albinn*,—The highest parts of a country, as the Alps ; a Celtic term applied to many places, as well as the North, now called Scotland. The Greeks denominated the whole island, Albion, Great Britain.

*Braigh-tuinn*,—Above the waves, contracted *Breatan*. Still the Gaelic name of Britain ; and *Breatanich*, Britons.

*Cail*,—See Gail.

*Gall*,—Stranger ; *Gaill*, plural ; the name given by the first inhabitants of North Britain to a Gothic race who first arrived in the western isles.

*Gauil*—Contracted *Gael*, and sometimes pronounced *Cael*, literally Gauls ; *Gauil*, the people of Gaul ; *Cael* and *daoine*, men, Caledonians.

*Iar-inn*,—Western isles ; contracted *Erin*, Ireland.

*Piocaich*,—Pilferers ; Picts ; a term of contempt given to the Gaill, or strangers.

*Scotuich*,—Wanderers, Scots ; applied in retaliation, as they frequently removed from place to place with their herds and flocks.

*Culdees*,—*Cul*, *cuil*, retreat ; *aich* or *dich*, they who fled to a retreat, refugees.

*Cultores Dei*,—Worshippers of God. Were there not others as well as the Culdees, should that be the meaning of the term, who claimed the appellation ?

*Gille De*,—Servant of God.

*Firbholg*,—Belgians.

*Colum*, Irish ; *Calum*, Gaelic ; Columba, Malcolm.

*Clachan*,—Church ; the walls of which were built of stónes.

*Cathair*,—Chair ; *Cathair-Chuldich*, chair or seat of the Culdee.

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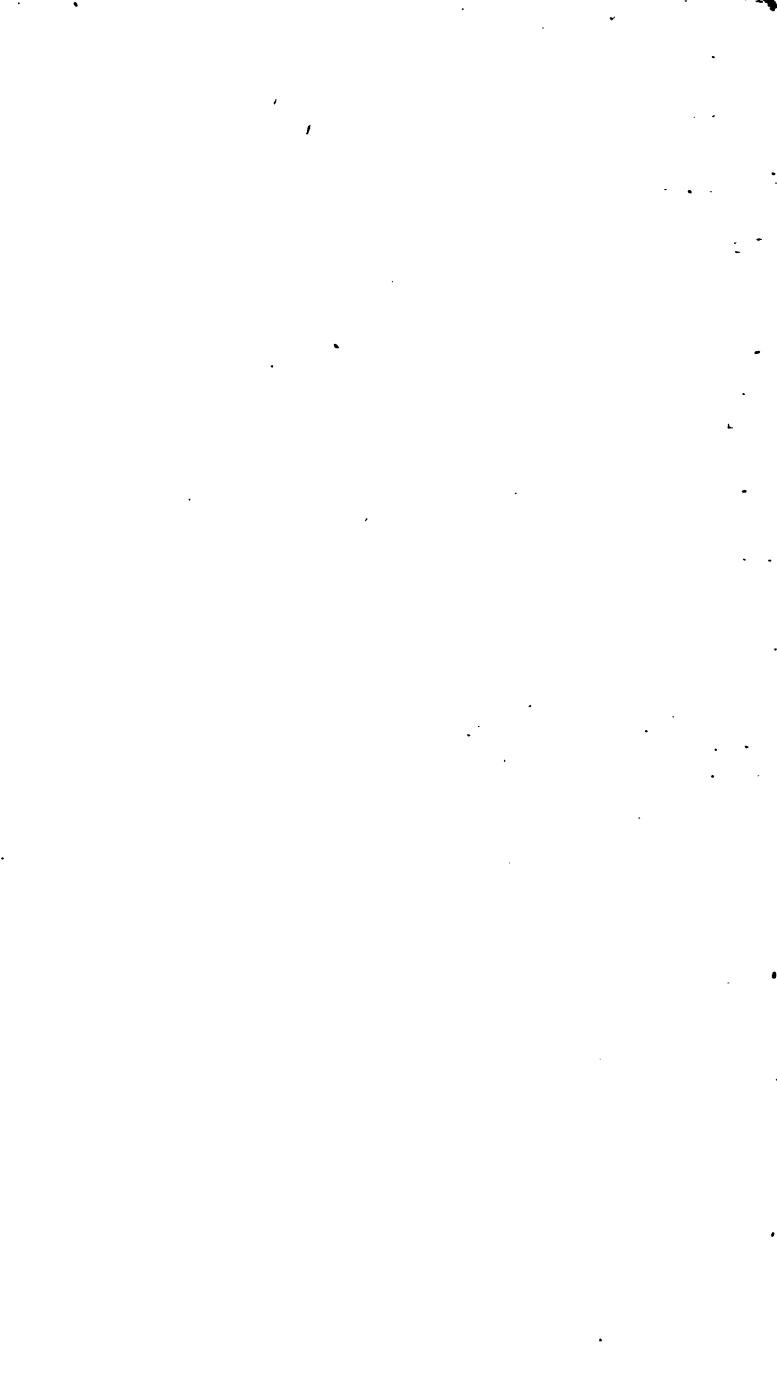
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